

ATLANTIC MONTHLY  
THE MINOR COLLECTION

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# Lincoln Forgeries

## *Atlantic Monthly* Minor Collection (2)

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



LIBERTY LIFE  
Referred to \_\_\_\_\_  
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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

# Bulletin

## SECOND SPECIAL NUMBER

PUBLISHED BY LINCOLN CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION, JANUARY 1, 1929

### THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY HOAX CONTINUES.

Heralded by extensive advertising, the December number of the Atlantic Monthly brought out the first installment of a serial containing the greatest Lincoln "discovery" of all time — the love correspondence of Lincoln and Ann Rutledge, together with letters, diaries and memoranda by New Salem residents describing the course of the courtship.

Within a week the Lincoln Centennial Association issued a statement describing this material as spurious. This statement reached the Philadelphia Record, and the Managing-Editor of that paper at once wired Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, the Atlantic Editor, for comment. Not having seen the despatch to which he referred, Mr. Sedgwick declined to comment upon it, but did say that the material had been under scrutiny in his office for many weeks by persons of long experience, and that his own views were so greatly affected by study of the original documents that he distrusted all inferences drawn from reproductions.

At the same time Mr. Worthington C. Ford, who had completed an independent investigation, publicly challenged the genuineness of the Atlantic material on the sole ground of dissimilarity in hand-

writing. Mr. Sedgwick, replying at once, acknowledged the weight of Mr. Ford's opinion, but, calling attention to the fact that handwriting experts rarely agree, asserted that "he cannot expect that his opinion will be shared by all qualified judges." Mr. Sedgwick then named Ida M. Tarbell, William E. Barton, Charles Moore, Carl Sandburg and a "Mr. Putnam" (presumably the Librarian of Congress) as experts who believed the documents authentic. Because of the disagreement between these experts and Mr. Ford, Mr. Sedgwick asserted that the authenticity of this material "must be decided upon the body of evidence as a whole—upon the identification of the various owners through whom the collection has descended, the character and contents of the documents themselves, their relations with known historical fact, as well as the handwriting."

The Lincoln Centennial Association's Special Bulletin was published the day after this statement was made. While pointing out the obvious dissimilarity of the handwriting, the main argument of the Bulletin was devoted to just those matters upon which Mr. Sedgwick had said the issue must be decided. It pointed out that the identification of



the various owners through whom the collection had descended was not above suspicion, that the general character of the documents themselves was totally unlike that of genuine Lincoln letters and documents, and that several statements in the Atlantic letters required more than reasonable explanation to make them conform to known historical fact.

This Bulletin was brought to the attention of Mr. Sedgwick by eastern newspapers, and through them he made his reply. Of the many inconsistencies it pointed out he suggested a possible explanation for one only. He then asked that final judgment be withheld until the entire series had been published and the original papers could be examined—this in spite of the fact that the material under attack apparently was printed for the purpose of establishing the genuineness of the documents which were to follow. At the same time, in the Boston Herald, Mr. Sedgwick called particular attention to a letter from Carl Sandburg, one of those who had seen the original letters and who believed them genuine.

But in the New York Times for December 5, Mr. Sandburg published a statement reversing his first opinion, and declaring that he was no longer convinced that these papers were not a hoax. Dr. Barton, five days later, publicly stated not only that he regards this material as spurious, but denied that he ever expressed a belief in its genuineness. Moreover, there is good reason for believing that the other experts on whom reliance was placed no longer consider the Atlantic material genuine, if they ever did. In addition, numerous well qualified judges have pronounced the letters forgeries.

Yet in spite of the fact that experts of high standing have decided

against the Atlantic Monthly material on the ground of handwriting, in spite of the fact that serious inconsistencies have been pointed out in the documents themselves, and in spite of the fact that those who were committed to a belief in the genuineness of these letters have either retracted or denied that they ever expressed such a belief, the acclamation of the "great discovery" continues. On December 6—after thorough criticism of this material had appeared in Boston newspapers—letters were sent from the Boston office of the Atlantic Monthly soliciting subscriptions on the sole ground that the December, January and February issues were to contain "the hitherto unpublished original love letters which passed between Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge." On December 11—six days after Mr. Sandburg published his statement reversing his original opinion of the Atlantic material—other letters soliciting subscriptions were issued in which the following statement was made: "Some distinguished Lincoln scholars, who have seen only the reproductions, have thrown up their hands, refusing to believe that it can be true—whereas Carl Sandburg, who has spent hour after hour examining the original documents, says: 'These new Lincoln letters seem entirely authentic—and preciously and wonderfully co-ordinate and chime with all else known of Lincoln.'" And now, in the January issue of the Atlantic Monthly, the second installment of the serial is published with no other hint of the widespread criticism which the first installment called forth than the erroneous statement that "such a revolutionary discovery as these Lincoln letters and books can, of course, only be finally appraised by scrutiny of the originals."

The second installment contains the heart of the Minor collection. In addition to more memoranda from the pen of Sally Calhoun, and one other letter from Lincoln to John Calhoun, there are letters from Lincoln to Ann Rutledge, letters from Ann to Lincoln and Matilda Cameron, and extracts from Matilda's diary.

It will be remembered that while only the material published in the December number of the magazine was directly attacked by Mr. Ford and by the first Special Bulletin of the Association, the authenticity of the entire collection was rendered dubious by the fact that an unusually reliable local history, Power's "Early Settlers of Sangamon County," failed to list a Sally or Sarah among the children of John Calhoun. To this point Mr. Sedgwick made the obvious answer that one of the Calhoun girls might have been known as Sarah or Sally to her friends. In reply we quote a letter from Mrs. Adele P. McCord of St. Joseph, Missouri—undated but postmarked December 12, 1928—who is a daughter of Susan Calhoun Parker, and the only living grandchild of John and Sarah Cutter Calhoun. Mrs. McCord writes: "I was an only grandchild on her side of the family & very fond of my Grandmother Sarah Cutter Calhoun. I became closely associated with her & my Aunts, and never once did I hear any one of them called Sally. . . . The names [of the Calhoun children] were John, Andrew, Elizabeth, Seth, Albert, Martha, Susan, Mary & James."

The general presumption of spuriousness based on the non-existence of Sally becomes increasingly strong when the evidence reveals that Matilda Cameron, the original possessor of the Atlantic documents, is also a legendary individual. Mrs.

Edna Orendorff Macpherson of the Illinois State Historical Library, a great niece of the wife of John Cameron, Matilda's mother, has in her possession a copy of the page in the Cameron family Bible on which the names and birth dates of the children were inscribed. The daughters were eleven in number—but the name Matilda is conspicuously absent.

However, three of the girls bore the middle initial M., which might conceivably have stood for Matilda. But in the first extract from Matilda Cameron's diary, printed on page ten of the Atlantic for January, occurs this statement: "I will keep everything in my box James giv me last crismas. my first bow wuz James and *now Sam* Anns wuz first John and now Abe. she wuz 17 when she met John and I wuz 19 when I first met James." Since this extract, dated July 10, 1833, shows that James and Matilda were lovers at the last Christmas, their first meeting could not have occurred later than 1832. If Matilda was then nineteen, she must have been born not later than 1813. But Vicana M., the second of the Cameron girls and the first to bear the middle initial M., was born December 31, 1815. A daughter was born in 1813, but it was Elizabeth P.

Other general considerations beside the apparent non-existence of Sally Calhoun and Matilda Cameron strengthen the presumption of spuriousness. The same stiltedness which characterized the Lincoln letters printed in the December Atlantic marks those found in the second installment. The writer's habit of commencing almost every sentence, save those which begin with the personal pronoun I, with a small letter is totally unlike Lincoln. It is curious, too, that in the jungle of



misspellings which make up the Ann Rutledge letters and the Cameron diary extracts, the short simple words should be so frequently misspelled and the longer, more difficult ones so often given correctly. In the Cameron diary for July 10, 1833, for instance, *one*, *once*, *twice*, *said*, *was* and *gone* are all spelled incorrectly, while *present*, *diary*, *literary*, *Missouri*, *Springfield* and *anthems* are spelled without fault. Curious also is the number of corroborative references in the letters themselves. One can hardly escape the feeling that the forger was trying to create internal evidence strong enough to refute criticism.

When to these general considerations evidence from a number of specific statements is added, the presumption of spuriousness evolves into a certainty. As an example, take the first letter of Ann Rutledge to Lincoln, printed on page eight. The writer says, "I am greatfull for the Spencers copy-book I copy from that every time I can spair." A thoughtful impulse, this statement, for Spencer's style of penmanship, florid as it was, would have been a distinct improvement on Ann's humble, halting writing. The fact remains, however, that Spencer's first publication on penmanship, issued under the title of "Spencer and Rice's System of Business and Ladies' Penmanship," was published in 1848—thirteen years after the following entry had been made in the Rutledge family Bible: "Anna Mayes Rutledge departed this life August 25th 1835."

But Ann Rutledge, copying Spencer's flourishes fourteen or fifteen years before the appearance of his first book, was in no way superior to Matilda Cameron in supernatural powers. In the undated diary entry on page ten, written presumably in

1833 or 1834, Matilda remarks, "Marthy Calhone teched Ann sum new patern of kroschay and she is going to tech me." Here we have evidence of direct contact with the spirit world, for Power's "History" records that Martha, sixth child of John Calhoun, first saw the light of day on January 9, 1843.

Close examination reveals still another evidence of more than human ability. Twice Matilda Cameron writes of the boats from Springfield. In her diary, printed on page seven, she states that her church got the first "New Missouri Harmany Hym book" on the "last boat from Springfield;" while on page ten she records that "the boat being du Satiday cum in while we wuz by the mill and Dave turnham a frend of Abes from gentryville. . . . cum down." Yet Springfield is and always was six miles distant from the Sangamon River. Moreover, the records indicate that only twice was the Sangamon navigated by boats of any size. *The Talisman* got to a point near Springfield in 1832—and hastily retreated just in time to avoid being stranded by the receding waters. Four years later *The Utility* managed to get as far as New Salem, only to be tied to the dam and sold for timber because the river was too low to permit its departure. Anyone who has ever seen the narrow shallow Sangamon marvels that craft larger than canoes ever floated upon it. Yet, according to Matilda, in July, 1833—a time of the year when one can wade the river at almost any point—boats were plying regularly between Springfield and New Salem.

So much for Ann and Matilda. What about Lincoln? On May 9, 1834, according to the *Atlantic Monthly*, he wrote John Calhoun a letter—both men being official sur-



veyors—in which he inquired about “the Certificate of Survey of Joshua Blackburn’s Claim,” and informed his employer that “there seems some controversy between him and Green concerning that North East quarter of Section 40.” Admittedly, Lincoln learned surveying in a very short time—six weeks—but even that should have been long enough for him to grasp the elementary fact that since 1785 the government system of surveys, under which the Old Northwest was laid out, had provided for townships divided into thirty-six sections numbered consecutively from one to thirty-six.

Hardly less reprehensible is Lincoln’s ignorance of geography, revealed in his remark that “the ‘Bixbys’ are leaving this week for some place in Kansas.” We must, of course, bear in mind that at this time Lincoln was only twenty-five years old, and that, in later years, he confessed that when he came of age he “did not know much.” Nevertheless, as a pioneer he should have been aware that Kansas was not open to white settlement. Had he looked at any of the contemporary maps he would have discovered that even his terminology was wrong, for without exception they described the vast extent of territory west of Missouri and north of Arkansas Territory as “Missouri Territory” or “Indian Territory,” and dotted it with the names of the Indian tribes there located. Had he turned from maps to gazetteers, he would have found Kansas listed only as a river. And had he pursued his investigations to the extent of discovering what the guide books had to say of Missouri Territory, more than one would have informed him that it was “almost wholly uninhabited, except by Indians.”

Commenting editorially, the

Springfield (Massachusetts) *Republican* summarizes the case admirably. “In the November newspaper advertisements of these love letters,” it says, “the suggestion that they might be forgeries was not offered to the public. We were invited to buy the Atlantic and read one of the greatest historical finds of the century. The love letters of Abraham Lincoln to Ann Rutledge had at last been discovered. The ‘ad’ assured the magazine-buying public that the greatest pains had been taken to test the genuineness of the manuscripts. Nothing, apparently, had been left undone to guard against fraud. It was a natural inference that all of the Lincoln experts, having a recognized standing, had been consulted and that no doubt whatever remained as to the authenticity of these century-old missives.”

But, *The Republican* goes on to say, the publication of the first installment was the signal for a widespread attack upon the genuineness of these documents. “It was then that Editor Sedgwick asked the public to ‘suspend judgment.’ Installment No. 2 of the letters has been immediately followed by an intensified bombardment from the experts, now four in number, who scoff at them ‘as spurious beyond the possibility of a doubt.’ And how does Editor Sedgwick meet this crisis? By asking us to keep our judgment suspended a while longer? Ah, no! He announces that whether the love letters are spurious or not, it is all the same to him. The object of publication, it now appears, was to get the love letters out into the light for the expert examination of the Lincoln authorities.

“This is the new editorial method of magazine publication for sensational historical data of questionable

authenticity. Publish the fake—for whose benefit? Bless you, innocent! For the benefit of the experts.      tic, seeing how he gets away with it.”

“The oldest newspaper rowdies, either dead or alive, would take off their hats to the editor of the Atlan-

WORTHINGTON C. FORD,  
OLIVER R. BARRETT,  
PAUL M. ANGLE.



## *The Atlantic for 1929*

**A**LREADY here in the office we are calling it the Lincoln year. Elsewhere in this issue our readers will find the story of the extraordinary circumstances which enable us to publish for the first time the Original Love Letters which passed between Abraham Lincoln and young Ann Rutledge.

### *Lincoln Letters Never Before Published*

This chapter out of the life of Lincoln has always been shrouded in mystery. With books on Lincoln running into the thousands it has long seemed impossible to unearth any new material about this greatest of our leaders. Imagine then, our incredulity when the Wilma Frances Minor collection first appeared, our amazement that authentic Lincoln letters had defied the most diligent research of the biographer, and our delight when the material passed test after test put to it by the country's most distinguished Lincoln scholars.

### *An Invaluable Collection of Lincolniana*

Lincoln's letters to Ann, hers to him, the Bible she gave him, Lincoln's letters to his friend and benefactor John Calhoun, his rhetoric book with characteristic marginalia, the diary of Ann's cousin Mathilda Cameron, a simply written record of this Idyll of New Salem, which describes the progress of the romance and the bitter grief of the young lover at the untimely death of Ann — all this and much more is included among the documents which, to those already privileged to see them, seem the most moving personal mementoes in our history.

Their deposit in the treasure room of the Library of Congress at Washington has been invited by the Librarian, and a public exhibition will be arranged. Miss Minor's story, with its wealth



## *The Atlantic for 1929*

of original Lincoln data, begins in this issue of the Atlantic. It will continue for several months and will alone make the 1929 Atlantic a worth-while keepsake.

### *The Whiteoaks of Jalna*

Nor is this the only tempting plum we have in store for the coming year. Beginning in an early issue, and continuing also for several months, we shall publish *The Whiteoaks of Jalna*. Here Wakefield, Finch, Renny and the other unforgettable characters of Mazo de la Roche's *Jalna* reappear. Here the Canadian writer, whose novel made so many new Atlantic friends in 1927, gives satisfying answer to the cries of "more" which her prize-winning *Jalna* aroused. Nothing which has come to the editorial desk in months can surpass, for sheer mirthful high spirits, the encounters between the diabolic boy, Wakefield and the hundred-year-old Grandmother, grim, masterful and indeed terrific in the matchless valor with which she stalks undefeated to the end. Yes, we can recommend, warmly, these Whiteoaks of Jalna, a commendation which does not necessarily include their manners.

### *If Big Business Came to France*

No habitual contributor to the Atlantic is more eagerly read or more widely quoted than Earnest Elmo Calkins, who writes specifically on business and advertising, and so doing contributes generally to our knowledge of life and living. Returned from one of his frequent sojourns in France, Mr. Calkins combines two subjects wherein he is equally authoritative and entertaining, American business and French character, in the paper *If Big Business Came to France*. Lovers of France and practitioners of American business methods alike will find trenchant comment in this article, the first of a new series.

### *Fiction Writers and Philosophers*

Ivy Lee will have important things to say in *The Black Legend* which brings light to bear on the dark chapters of our reputation abroad. Joseph Wood Krutch will sum up his philosophy



# Forgery of Lincoln Letters Impossible, Says San Diego Woman, Author of Articles

Wilma Frances Minor Replies to Attacks on Magazine  
Memoirs of Martyr President; Writes Long Letter to  
Kansas Editor Telling of Literary Find; Says She Is  
Willing to Trust to Judgment of American People.

*The San Diego Union 1-3-29*

Thrust by a series of Lincoln articles, appearing under her name in the Atlantic Monthly, into one of the most spirited literary controversies of recent years, Mrs. E. E. Akins of San Diego yesterday replied for the first time and at length to attacks challenging the authenticity of certain Lincoln love letters that she has incorporated in her magazine series.

While some eastern writers have attacked, with marked asperity, the genuineness of these letters, others have hailed them as one of the greatest literary discoveries in years.

Casting a new light on Lincoln's great romance, his love for Anne Rutledge, the letters have furnished a nucleus around which Mrs. Akins, who is better known by her maiden name of Wilma Frances Minor, has woven a series of Lincoln memoirs. Not only has Mrs. Akins drawn from her family archives the group of Lincoln's letters, but she has uncovered several missives bearing the name of his youthful sweetheart, Anne Rutledge.

## Welcomes Sincere Critics

Mrs. Akins said yesterday that she harbors no animosity against those Lincoln students, enthusiasts and biographers who are sincerely contesting the authenticity of the Lincoln-Rutledge letters. She feels keenly, however, she said, about those contestants who, in their attempt to prove the letters false, are casting a blemish on the integrity of her ancestors.

A request, printed in William Allen White's Emporia Gazette, asking for anyone who has information that might shed light on the authenticity of the letters or incidents mentioned in them, to communicate with the paper, prompted Mrs. Akins yesterday to make the first reply to the attacks on her story.

"I am a personal friend of William Allen White," Mrs. Akins said. "Because of this friendship I have outlined in detail the history of the letters, showing just how they came into my hands."

A copy of this letter was given by Mrs. Akins to The Union.

## ANNOYED BY INQUIRIES

So loud has the echo of the eastern controversy been heard here that Mrs.

Akins has been forced, she said, to have her telephone disconnected and at times to leave the city to escape the numerous callers desirous of questioning her concerning the letters.

"I have been flooded with letters," she said. "I have even been requested to appear at public gatherings. In publishing the letters I did not do so with the view of financial reward. I did it because I thought such a collection should be placed before the people of the nation."

Early in September, just a short time after she had submitted her manuscript and the letters to Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the Atlantic Monthly, Mrs. Akins received a telegram requesting her to come to Boston at once and at the expense of the company, to discuss publication plans. She accepted, and while in the east was the guest of the magazine and the Little-Brown Publishing company.

The honor of the trip east was a signal one for her, she said, as it is said that only three times before has the company brought authors to the home office at their expense.

That the controversy arising from the publication of the Lincoln series

## Mrs. E. E. Akins

Better known by her pen name, Wilma Frances Minor, who is the centre of a spirited controversy, following the publication of new Lincoln letters.



was not unexpected, was shown Mrs. Akins yesterday.

"When in Boston the editors predicted that just such a dispute would arise," she said. "I was surprised. I thought the nation would welcome the publication of the letters."

Following the serialization of the

(Continued on page 6)

articles in the magazine they are to be published by the Little-Brown company in book form.

## HER LETTER TO WHITE

Mrs. Akins lives at 4020 Forty-seventh street. It was at her home, surrounded by books and at her working desk, that she finished the following reply to the numerous attacks that have been hurled against her, and, she thinks, against members of her family who, she added, are "no longer here to answer."

"In order to assist in clearing up the circumstances surrounding the finding of the Lincoln-Rutledge letters it is necessary to go back to the very early days of Kansas and delve into family history, so I begin with the writers of those precious old documents which have caused such a sensation in the literary world and bring them down to date.

"In the little backwoods town of New Salem, back in 1831, lived Ann Rutledge, untutored but lovely daughter of the innkeeper and founder of the village. In the spring of that year Lincoln's flatboat, en route to New Orleans, got stranded on the dam, and there, on the river bank, occurred the first meeting of Ann and Abe.

"On his return from New Orleans Abe decided to locate in the tiny hamlet, the decision inspired, no doubt, by his desire to be near the attractive Ann. Later he learned she was engaged to John McNamar, and honor forbade him making any advances. But after a year or so, when McNamar went to New York and Ann believed herself jilted (since no letters came) the friendship ripened into love. Ann and Abe were betrothed and on the eve of their marriage she died of malarial fever.

## TRISTS OF SWEETHEARTS

"During the first months of their courtship the two lovers were laboring under a decided disadvantage, for the severe code of Ann's very religious parents demanded that she remain true to her pledge to John McNamar, although he had sent her no word, so the trysts and notes were secretive.

"The Rutledge tavern afforded no privacy, so Ann, whose every action was spied upon by her sister Nancy and reported to her parents, gave her few notes to her cousin and confidante, Matilda Cameron, who lived near by and who was the proud possessor of a little home-made trunk to which she alone carried the key.

"In the first terrible storm of grief that swept through Abe after the death of his beloved, he gave his letters from Ann into the care of Matilda to keep for him until such time as he could get a grip on himself. Thus the entire collection was held by Matilda who added her own illuminating diary. Later, the documents passed to another member of the Cameron family, Mary, who, when the



doctors told her she was dying of quick consumption, sent the letters and keepsakes to her dear friend, Sally Calhoun. Sally was the daughter of John Calhoun, the surveyor and friend of Lincoln, so the documents were naturally treasured in that family.

#### COLLECTION DIVIDED

"While Sally was in Missouri she met Elizabeth Hirth, a young school teacher, and Margaret Morrison, daughter of a Baptist minister. (This minister was my great-grandfather.) Sally divided the Lincoln collection between the two dear friends, perhaps keeping some for herself, and added several memo-leaves which contained data furnished by her father.

"Now to connect up another link in the chain of evidence, we must go back to about the time when Abe Lincoln settled in New Salem, Ill. At that early date William Mickel (by maternal grandfather) took his family to the undeveloped mid-western prairies. That was before Kansas was even a territory and was simply known as 'Kansas lands' or 'lands of Kansas'—possibly so called from the river.

"A few emigrants had ventured into that part of the country even before that time, although it was not officially opened to settlers, and had received such hostile treatment from the Indians that in 1818, in Atchison county, the government established

the first military post called Cantonment Martin. And in 1827 Fort Leavenworth was established. But these forts were many miles distant from the spot selected by William Mickel for a home, so the unfriendly Indian and the other vicissitudes of pioneer life greatly retarded the development of the land that he took up and squared off, and which in after years measured just a little over 1000 acres. (Not until many years after could he even own this land.)

"When more people joined the tiny settlement (among them Robert 'Uncle Bob' Best and family, well-known Kansas pioneers) William Mickel felt they should have a town, hence he built an inn or hotel, a two-story structure of native black walnut, a general store and several cabins. Then he added a stage stable and called the place Waterloo.

#### VISIT TO GRAVES

"The hotel is still standing about 20 miles north of Emporia, Kan., although the other buildings have disappeared.

"On my first trip to Kansas, Dr. George Mickel, son of William Mickel, took my mother and my aunt, Mrs. Hirth, and myself to visit Waterloo. We spent hours in the old hotel, then drove a few miles further to a little tumble-down, weed grown cemetery. Most of the inscriptions of the few remaining head stones were obliterated, but in that little square William and Margaret Mickel, sturdy pioneer spirits, were laid side by side.

"This brave man had laid out the town on what he considered a logical site for a railroad at some future date, but that expectation was never realized—that same blasted hope has written fins to many embryonic cities.

"William Mickel was a man of fine character, a charter Mason of Kansas, cultured, and, judged by the standards of that time, wealthy. In the course of the years three wives had borne him a large family, among them three well-known physicians and surgeons, Doctors William, Fred and George Mickel, and Nellie Mickel, who as the stately Mrs. Nellie Traylor is well known to many Emporia citizens. She is still living and devotes her time to religious work.

"Frederick Hirth moved to Lyon county Kansas, from Dodge county, Wisconsin, in 1859, and in Feb. 1860 he settled in Emporia where he operated his own furniture and coffin factory. (All this is recorded in the early history of Kansas)

"Now Preacher Morrison migrated to Kansas from Missouri and brought his three attractive daughters, Lydia, Sarah Frances, and Margaret Frances, and his son Norman (Dr. Norman Morrison, for forty-five years chief surgeon of the Santa Fe railroad, a position now held by his son).

"William Mickel, at that time a widower, and, although 51, was of such commanding stature and such prepossessing appearance and manners that he won the heart and hand of young Margaret Frances Morrison, while Frederick Hirth successfully courted Sarah Frances, and married her on Feb. 27, 1868.

"Margaret bore two daughters to her husband, and before the oldest child was three, both parents had died—within six months of each other.

#### FAMILY HISTORY

"One girl had been named 'Cora' after Cora Barton (the Bartons were a very influential family in Lyon county in the early days—they later moved to California) and Belle after one of the Bests. Cora Belle was taken into the home of her aunt and uncle Hirth, and she was raised as their own. The other daughter was adopted by a family named Watson, and today is known as Mrs. Jennie Watson Healy, of Arkansas City, Kansas.

"Elizabeth Hirth, finding that she was not able to properly care for the precious bundle of Lincoln keepsakes as her teaching carried her far and wide, and realizing her brother Fred's devotion to Lincoln, she early decided that the logical thing to do was to give them to him; she also urged Margaret to the same course, thus the entire lot became the prized possession of Fred Hirth. (All this transfer of the documents is definitely established by the old letters from these very people.)

"Hirth enlisted in the Civil war in 1861, private, Second Kansas, and was severely wounded—it is traditional history that General Grant himself staunchly the flow of blood from that wound—certain it is that Grant was personally interested in this soldier, for he later spoke of him to his president (I have a letter written to Hirth by President Lincoln in which this is confirmed).

"Returning to Emporia as a semi-invalid, Hirth devoted time and patience to compiling the very earliest data on Kansas (in this he was greatly helped by William Mickel) and all his findings were pasted and written into a large scrap book, half filling it. The other half contained every clipping that he could get that related to Lincoln, Grant and the Civil war.

#### SCRAPBOOK SOUGHT

"This book contained such authoritative information that it was often referred to when a dispute arose over Kansas or Civil war history. (Unfortunately, this valuable scrapbook has been lost sight of, but relatives have instituted a search for it. It was well-known to many Emporia citizens).

"Frederick Hirth was an austere, introspective type of man who lived among his books and his memories (many times I have heard my great-aunt say that in all the years they lived together she was never really acquainted with him), and few people were intimate with him, except Robert Jeff, the elder, P. G. Hallberg, whose son is a nurseryman in Emporia, and Dr. Norman Morrison.

"Cora Belle, when a child, often saw her uncle exhibit the scrapbook and the old documents which she now realizes were the Lincoln-Rutledge letters, to these cronies, but that meant nothing to her childish mind at the time. All these things were kept in a massive old secretary that dominated the parlor in the Hirth home on South Commercial street, Emporia, Kansas.

"Mrs. Margie Waterbury, widow of Judge Waterbury, long a prominent figure in Emporia, was a constant visitor in the Hirth home in her girlhood; she has gone on record with the statement that she remembers well the tin box containing these documents,

'had seen it a thousand times,' and knew it to contain the Lincoln-Rutledge documents. (Representative citizens of Emporia have stated that they remember Hirth's possession of Lincoln letters).

"Mrs. Jennie Healy, who spent some time in the Hirth home before Mr. Hirth's death, states that she heard Mr. Hirth speak of these documents and of his wish that they be handed on to the niece he had raised, Cora Belle, now Mrs. Cora de Boyer of Chula Vista, California (my mother). To Dr. Wayland Morrison he gave his discharge papers and his musket, while Mrs. Healy received his carbine which he had carried after he joined the cavalry in the Civil war. The aforementioned letter to Hirth from his president is in reply to Hirth's request for knowledge on the whereabouts of his horse which had carried him in his last battles. Wounded and carried to the hospital, he had lost track of the handsome black, 'General Seigel,' and he grieved over his loss. Fortunately, Mr. Lincoln knew where the horse had been held and he so informs Hirth in that letter—the letter, by the way, dated two days before the assassination.

#### FURNITURE STORED

"Uncle Fred Hirth's death in 1907 was such a blow to my aunt that after a short time she found it impossible to remain in the old home, so, impulsively, she stored different pieces of furniture in the homes of friends, and sought forgetfulness in travel. (The secretary was given to the Hallbergs, who still have it, and someone in Emporia has the old bureau that he made in his furniture factory. It contained a secret compartment and may now hold documents of worth unknown to the present owner).

"Many quilts that she had pieced and feather beds, etc., were given to different relatives; in fact, everything except her money was disposed of long before her death. The money was left to a relative, Miss Georganne Anderson of Bronson, Kan., who cared for her in her final illness.

"When Mrs. Hirth went to California she left the tin box containing the Lincoln letters with her niece, Cora, telling her that it was some keepsakes that Fred set such store by and wanted her to have. However, they were not to be opened or considered the property of Mrs. de Boyer until after her (Mrs. Hirth's) death.

#### VALUE UNKNOWN

"Never dreaming of their value, Mrs. de Boyer did not open the box until some time after Mrs. Hirth had passed away. The family had moved into the town house and had stored the box among other things at the ranch. When Mrs. de Boyer (my mother) realized that she had actual Lincoln documents in her possession, she sent for me at once, and together we went over them carefully and shed many tears over the old, faded and torn treasures. I had later to learn that most of their contents were unknown to the historians, and my first understanding of this brought me to the realization that the collection should be placed before the people of the nation, either in a museum or in the congressional library, but mature judgment made it clear that if the documents were surrounded by a great deal of extra traditional data, which we knew to be available through the Andersons (that branch of our family are directly descended from the Andersons of Anderson's Creek, who are near neighbors and friends of the Lincolns), and through the Holts, especially Uncle Gibson Holt, formerly of Hartford Kan. who before his death at an advanced age had collected Lincolniana in a small but very direct way its value could be intensified.

"Working in collaboration, my mother and I gleaned every atom of information, by research, by travel, by contact with people who had something worth while to offer, and when the chain of evidence was complete, we wrote it all into a book for the

benefit of the people of America, and placed it in the hands of a publisher who studied this background—this history of the documents, even to the minutest detail, and who then called in all the experts deemed necessary to further establish their authenticity, and when the first installments were published we were savagely attacked by some Lincoln authorities who pronounced the letters forgeries even before they had seen the originals, and before even one-half of the evidence was submitted.

#### SAYS FORGERY IMPOSSIBLE

"Looking back over the line of worthy people who treasured these keepsakes and letters, noting that none of them had sought to sell them or otherwise profit by their possession, feeling that even in publishing them now we are going against the wishes of Fred Hirth, the strange, silent, reverent man who must have felt those sacred love letters of his beloved Lincoln far too intimate for publication or exhibition, how is it possible for us to believe them the forgeries that some men are disposed to call them?

"These authorities point out certain references in those letters which they say are not correct. For in-

stance—Majilda speaks of the boat bringing people and things from Springfield. Because Springfield was six miles from the river these authorities would have the diary discredited. But with transportation what it was in those days, people resorted to any means possible to get their goods and themselves transferred from one point to another, and the few little flatboats fighting their way down the Sangamon river must have been a God-send to the settlers in that territory.

"In 100 years from now if posterity discovers among my letters some airmail which has reached me in San Diego, they will no doubt, arise and lustily shout 'forgeries!' because they can prove by records that airmail was only carried as far as Los Angeles (about 135 miles from San Diego.) But even in 1928 we were glad to get it that far, relying on train service to bring it the rest of the way.

"It is obvious that anyone clever enough to write the quaint and beautiful passages in those old letters and diaries, would also be gifted with the foresight to consult their histories and select the best known, and easily proved backgrounds for their story. It is just those little things that we of this day cannot explain in those old documents that make me know they are genuine.

#### FEELS IT DUTY

"Being a generation or so removed from those who knew Lincoln personally, I naturally have a better perspective and I feel that we have no right to bury such valuable evidence even though it is mostly of an intimate nature. There is nothing in it that would injure, and there is a great deal that tends to a better understanding of the great martyred president. I feel it a duty to give them to the world—my mother gave them to me for that very purpose, and even though it has involved us in a terrific controversy, and we have become the victims of savage attacks we fully realize that in every affair of national importance there are always two factions—those for and those against. It was thus since the world began. Both sides are right according to their lights, and I harbor no animosity toward the objectors as long as they fight fairly.

"I am impelled to go on until the whole mass of material is submitted to the citizens of the United States—it is theirs to accept or reject—and such is my faith in the authenticity of every shred of these old mementoes that I feel sure of victory in the end.

"WILMA FRANCES MINOR."



# Writer Of 'Lincoln Series' Defends Authenticity; Spurious Says W. C. Ford

## Boston Man On Visit To City Declares Writing Proves Falsity

"There is not a genuine document in the whole collection," Worthington C. Ford, Boston, Mass., past president of the American Historical society, declared yesterday in speaking of the alleged Lincoln letters which are being published in the Atlantic Monthly. Mr. Ford is in Springfield visiting Paul Angle, secretary of the Lincoln Centennial association, and doing research work in connection with the election of 1860.

"The whole thing is spurious," Mr. Ford stated. "Not only does the handwriting prove the falsity of the letters but the contents do also. There are too many misstatements for a man like Lincoln to make. Here in Springfield you have in the Lincoln Centennial association the best material for correcting just such attempts as this.

Mr. Ford, who is editor of the Massachusetts Historical society, has been attending the meeting of the American Historical society, of which he was president in 1914, at Indianapolis this week. "You always come away from those things in a state of mental indigestion," he said in referring to the meeting.

### Shrewd Politics.

"It was a remarkably shrewd bit of political management on the part of the Illinois delegation in 1860 that gave Lincoln the candidacy," Mr. Ford said. In his study of the conditions at that time, Mr. Ford yesterday went through the files of The Illinois State Journal for the years 1858 to 1861. He plans to speak in New York City on January 17 on the eclipse of Stephen A. Douglas at that time.

Credence was given by Mr. Ford to the theory that the Illinois delegation bought over the Pennsylvania and Indiana delegates in the Republican convention of 1860 by political promises. He pointed out that Lincoln was little known up until that time and that all of his life before that was formative. Lincoln never showed his true worth until the Gettysburg address, he said.

"Martyrdom confers a permanent crown upon anyone," Mr. Ford said in speaking of Lincoln, "but you cannot interpret a man's life by its end. It should be looked at through the other end of the telescope, starting from the beginning."

Americans are rather sentimental he declared. "If we are interested we do not do things by halves," he said. In this connection he mentioned the demonstrations and the hero worship for popular figures. "An official stands higher in the minds of the people the farther he gets away from Washington," he said.

### On Editorial Staff.

During Cleveland's first administration Mr. Ford went from the New York Herald, where he was a member of the editorial staff, to the department of state at Washington. In Cleveland's second term he was chief of the division of statistics.

In politics Mr. Ford belongs, he said, to the "mugwump" faction, which he described as the "independent political element, which constitutes that large silent vote, which no one knows where to place before election." This element belongs to neither of the two major parties, but is never strong enough to form a third party by itself, he said.

There will not be a third great party in the next twenty years, Mr. Ford predicted. Franklin D. Roosevelt is the logical Democratic candidate for president in 1932, he said, and stated that he is immensely popular.

## Author Of Articles Avers She Obtained Data From Her Mother

Special to The State Journal.

San Diego, Cal., Jan. 3.—Thrust by a series of articles about Abraham Lincoln now being printed by the Atlantic Monthly into one of the most spirited literary controversies of recent years, Mrs. E. E. Akins, better known by her maiden and pen name, Wilma Frances Miner, writer of those articles, replied today for the first time to attacks challenging the authenticity of Lincoln love letters incorporated into her articles. Letters concerning Lincoln's great romance, his love for Anne Rutledge, form the nucleus around which Mrs. Akins has woven a series of Lincoln memoirs which, it is announced, are to be made into a book later.

"It is obvious," she wrote in a letter given out here, "that anyone clever enough to write the quaint and beautiful passages in those old letters and diaries would also be gifted with the foresight to consult their histories and select the best known and easily proved backgrounds for their story. It is just those little things that we of this day can not explain in those old documents that make me know they are genuine."

"My mother gave them to me to give to the public, and though it has involved us in a terrific controversy and we have become the victims of savage attacks, we fully realize that in every affair of national importance there are always two factors—those for and those against."

"I am compelled to go on until the whole mass of material is submitted to the citizens of the United States. It is theirs to accept or reject, and such is my faith in the authenticity of every shred of these old mementoes that I feel sure of victory in the end."

Mrs. Akins' letter, which she said she was sending to William Allen White, of the Emporia Gazette, is given up largely to the history of Frederick Hirth, who, she says, has the Lincoln letters. They were found only recently, she says, in an old desk, "secretary," which had passed into possession of Mrs. Akins' mother.





Jan  
1929

Such a revolutionary discovery as these Lincoln letters and books can of course only be finally appraised by scrutiny of the originals. The public will have ample opportunity to make their own first-hand investigation when the collection is put on exhibition at the Library of Congress. In the meantime, it is interesting to note the significant fact, proved from three distinct and dispassionate sources, that a generation ago Mr. Frederick W. Hirth, who possessed the collection, was accustomed to speak of it with pride and pleasure. This Mr. Hirth, a great-uncle of Miss Minor's, died in 1907 in Emporia, Kansas. The chronicler of all things Kansan, Mr. William Allen White, tells us that he himself went to the Hirth funeral and can identify it in his recollection through the Masonic pomp and circumstance of the obsequies. Mr. White knew Mr. Hirth but slightly and did not talk with him concerning his collection, but three other letters in our possession attest our statement.

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Paul M. Angle is executive secretary of the Lincoln Centennial Association of Springfield, Illinois. The editor of the *Atlantic*, after talking with him in Chicago, in the course of an extended investigation of his own, gave Mr. Angle the information he had acquired and invited him to contribute the reasoned estimate which appears in this number. Readers especially interested in the many fascinating phases of this discussion may readily compare the facsimiles of documents in the Minor collection which appeared in the December and January numbers with easily accessible examples of authentic Lincoln writing in Carl Sandburg's *The Prairie Years* or other familiar biographies.

Apr. 1929

Letter to the Hon. Sec. of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed extension of the National Forest in the State of California. I am very glad to hear that the Department is so anxious to secure the preservation of the public lands, and I am sure that the National Forest will be maintained in its present condition. I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Yours truly,  
J. M. Smith

# THE ROMANTIC TEMPERAMENT.

Almost immediately after the appearance in the December number of The Atlantic Monthly of the first batch of so-called Lincoln letters and memoranda, the experts attacked them on many grounds—handwriting, history, genealogy, style, inaccuracies, both physical and political. "SALLY" CALHOUN, for an indefinite time proprietor of the treasure, was even reduced to the position of Mrs. Gamp's Mrs. Harris. Mr. ELLERY SEDGWICK, the accomplished editor of The Atlantic, upon whom conviction of the genuineness of the collection had been "forced" by inquiry after his original natural doubts, stood out nobly against the storm of criticism. "Final judgment," he said early in December, still in the bright honeymoon of his "discovery," should be "deferred until the entire series is published."

Now the owner of the documents and writer of the articles, whose good faith is not questioned any more than Mr. SEDGWICK'S, declares that no more of them will be published until in her "judgment the story can be absolutely proved." Mr.

SEDGWICK is now "convinced that" the material lacks the authenticity "which I have publicly ascribed to it." When he has accumulated sufficient fresh "facts" he will enlighten the public. It might be unjust to say that all the acknowledged experts on the subject should have been consulted before any of the letters were published. Man never knows how romantic he is. The importance of the Ann Rutledge episode in LINCOLN'S actual life is easily and frequently exaggerated. But the romanticists yearn for it.

How their mouths must have watered as Mr. SEDGWICK told them of the "letters, passionate and real, which ABRAHAM wrote to ANN and ANN to ABRAHAM. There are other letters of LINCOLN'S own, telling of the love he bore ANN RUTLEDGE." Wasn't a dish of "discovery" like that enough to give an editor the unconscious will to believe? If the tale turn out to be a fact, the skeptics will have a hang-dog look and Romance be justified of her children. If it be fiction, that is one of the branches of The Atlantic's business. But a good many persons must be more than a little sick of the high-piled accretions of myth and legend behind which it becomes harder and harder to see LINCOLN at least something like what he was.

Of "the new storehouse of Lincoln material" it is unnecessary to say anything except that it shows us a slobbering, inflated and illiterate LINCOLN. Surely, that wasn't what Mr. SEDGWICK had in mind when he cried that "here is the human LINCOLN, before the sterility of his deification." When the story "is absolutely proved," we may venerate this sterile sentimentalist. Meanwhile, unbelievers may feel that the true story of the story would be a mighty sight more interesting than anything in the story itself.



9 January 1929

Dear Mr. Weik:-

I have no desire to involve you in the controversy that is causing such a sensation in literary circles over the authenticity of the Lincoln letters, but I would welcome the privilege of coming to you with the original documents. I have read your work on Lincoln and know how thorough was your knowledge, hence your opinion would carry great weight with me.

Everyone who has inspected the original documents are convinced that they are genuine. Reproductions are very unsatisfactory at best, and it is only on the evidence of a few reproductions that the so-called authorities are basing their adverse criticism.

We have every reason on earth for believing the legacy to be genuine and feel it a sacred duty to get it before the American people, and every day brings fresh proof that we are justified in our stand.

The identity of Sally (Sarah) Calhoun, has been questioned simply because family records showed no such name in John Calhoun's children. Now here are the facts as presented by a relative of the Calhoun family. One girl - Susan Calhoun, detested her first name, so when she was seven or eight years old the family allowed her to change her name and she chose to be known by her mother's name which was Sarah.

I feel sure that you must have known the Calhouns, and if so, you must know of the one known as Sally or Sarah. I am going to trace school records etc. but any light you can throw on the matter will be greatly appreciated, and be sure that I shall not use your name publicly in this affair unless you give permission.

This matter is of such grave import else I would not presume to bother you.

Thanking you in advance for any favor you might extend in this connection, I remain,

Sincerely,

Wilma Frances Minor  
4020 - 47th St.  
San Diego, Calif.



# Forgery of Lincoln Letters Impossible, Says San Diego Woman, Author of Articles

Wilma Frances Minor Replies to Attacks on Magazine  
Memoirs of Martyr President; Writes Long Letter to  
Kansas Editor Telling of Literary Find; Says She Is  
Willing to Trust to Judgment of American People.

Thrust by a series of Lincoln articles, appearing under her name in the Atlantic Monthly, into one of the most spirited literary controversies of recent years, [redacted] of San Diego yesterday replied for the first time and at length to attacks challenging the authenticity of certain Lincoln love letters that she has incorporated in her magazine series.

While some eastern writers have attacked, with marked asperity, the genuineness of these letters, others have hailed them as one of the greatest literary discoveries in years.

Casting a new light on Lincoln's great romance, his love for Anne Rutledge, the letters have furnished a nucleus around which [redacted], who is better known by her maiden name of Wilma Frances Minor, has woven a series of Lincoln memoirs. Not only has [redacted] drawn from her family archives the group of Lincoln's letters, but she has uncovered several mis-sives bearing the name of his youthful sweetheart, Anne Rutledge.

## Welcomes Sincere Critics

[redacted] said yesterday that she harbors no animosity against those Lincoln students, enthusiasts and biographers who are sincerely contesting the authenticity of the Lincoln-Rutledge letters. She feels keenly, however, she said, about those contestants who, in their attempt to prove the letters false, are casting a blemish on the integrity of her ancestors.

A request, printed in William Allen White's Emporia Gazette, asking for anyone who has information that might shed light on the authenticity of the letters or incidents mentioned in them, to communicate with the paper, prompted [redacted] yesterday to make the first reply to the attacks on her story.

"I am a personal friend of William Allen White," [redacted] said. "Because of this friendship I have outlined in detail the history of the letters, showing just how they came into my hands."

A copy of this letter was given by [redacted] to The Union.

## ANNOYED BY INQUIRIES

So loud has the echo of the eastern controversy been heard here that [redacted]

Better known by her pen-name, Wilma Frances Minor, who is the centre of a spirited controversy, following the publication of new Lincoln letters.



*Owing to my recent marriage the local paper used my married name which has no connection with Felix's work so I have deleted it. Miss Minor*





# WRITER REPLIES TO ATTACKS ON LINCOLN LOVE LETTERS

(Continued from Page 1)

articles in the magazine they are to be published by the company in book form.

## HER LETTER TO WHITE

Mrs. Akins lives at 4020 Forty-seventh street. It was at her home, surrounded by books and at her working desk, that she finished the following reply to the numerous attacks that have been hurled against her, and, she thinks, against members of her family who, she added, are "no longer here to answer."

"In order to assist in clearing up the circumstances surrounding the finding of the Lincoln-Rutledge letters it is necessary to go back to the very early days of Kansas and delve into family history, so I begin with the writers of those precious old documents which have caused such a sensation in the literary world and bring them down to date.

"In the little backwoods town of New Salem, back in 1831, lived Ann Rutledge, untutored but lovely daughter of the innkeeper and founder of the village. In the spring of that year Lincoln's flatboat, en route to New Orleans, got stranded on the dam, and there, on the river bank, occurred the first meeting of Ann and Abe.

"On his return from New Orleans Abe decided to locate in the tiny hamlet, the decision inspired, no doubt, by his desire to be near the attractive Ann. Later he learned she was engaged to John McNamar, and honor forbade him making any advances. But after a year or so, when McNamar went to New York and Ann believed herself jilted (since no letters came) the friendship ripened into love. Ann and Abe were betrothed and on the eve of their marriage she died of malarial fever.

## TRYSTS OF SWEETHEARTS

"During the first months of their courtship the two lovers were laboring under a decided disadvantage, for the severe code of Ann's very religious parents demanded that she remain true to her pledge to John McNamar, although he had sent her no word, so the trysts and notes were secretive.

"The Rutledge tavern afforded no privacy, so Ann, whose every action was spied upon by her sister Nancy and reported to her parents, gave her few notes to her cousin and confidante, Matilda Cameron, who lived near by and who was the proud possessor of a little home-made trunk to which she alone carried the key.

"In the first terrible storm of grief that swept through Abe after the death of his beloved, he gave his letters from Ann into the care of Matilda to keep for him until such time as he could get a grip on himself. Thus the entire collection was held by Matilda who added her own illuminating diary. Later, the documents passed to another member of the Cameron family, Mary, who, when the doctors told her she was dying of quick consumption, sent the letters and keepsakes to her dear friend, Sally Calhoun. Sally was the daughter of John Calhoun, the surveyor and friend of Lincoln, so the documents were naturally treasured in that family.

## COLLECTION DIVIDED

"While Sally was in Missouri she met Elizabeth Hirth, a young school teacher, and Margaret Morrison, daughter of a Baptist minister. (This minister was my great-grandfather.) Sally divided the Lincoln collection between the two dear friends, perhaps keeping some for herself, and

added several memo-leaves which contained data furnished by her father.

"Now to connect up another link in the chain of evidence, we must go back to about the time when Abe Lincoln settled in New Salem, Ill. At that early date William Mickley (by maternal grandfather) took his family to the undeveloped mid-western prairies. That was before Kansas was even a territory and was simply known as 'Kansas lands' or 'lands of Kansas'—possibly so called from the river.

"A few emigrants had ventured into that part of the country even before that time, although it was not officially opened to settlers, and had received such hostile treatment from the Indians that in 1818, in Atcheson county, the government established

the first military post called cantonment Martin. And in 1827 Fort Leavenworth was established. But these forts were many miles distant from the spot selected by William Mickley for a home, so the unfriendly Indian and the other vicissitudes of pioneer life greatly retarded the development of the land that he took up and squared off, and which in after years measured just a little over 1000 acres. (Not until many years after could he even own this land.)

"When more people joined the tiny settlement (among them Robert 'Uncle Bob' Best and family, well-known Kansas pioneers) William Mickley felt they should have a town, hence he built an inn or hotel, a two-story structure of native black walnut, a general store and several cabins. Then he added a stage stable and called the place Waterloo.

## VISIT TO GRAVES

"The hotel is still standing about 20 miles north of Emporia, Kan., although the other buildings have disappeared.

"On my first trip to Kansas, Dr. George Mickley, son of William Mickley, took my mother and my aunt, Mrs. Hirth, and myself to visit Waterloo. We spent hours in the old hotel, then drove a few miles further to a little tumble-down, weed grown cemetery. Most of the inscriptions of the few remaining head stones were obliterated, but in that little square William and Margaret Mickley, sturdy pioneer spirits, were laid side by side.

"This brave man had laid out the town on what he considered a logical site for a railroad at some future date, but that expectation was never realized—that same blasted hope has written finis to many embryonic cities.

"William Mickley was a man of fine character, a charter Mason of Kansas, cultured, and, judged by the standards of that time, wealthy. In the course of the years three wives had borne him a large family, among them three well-known physicians and surgeons, Doctors William, Fred and George Mickel, and Nellie Mickel, who as the stately Mrs. Nellie Traylor is well known to many Emporia citizens. She is still living and devotes her time to religious works.

"Frederick Hirth moved to Lyon county Kansas, from Dodge county, Wisconsin, in 1859, and in Feb. 1860 he settled in Emporia where he operated his own furniture and coffin factory. (All this is recorded in the early history of Kansas.)

"Now Preacher Morrison migrated to Kansas from Missouri and brought his three attractive daughters, Lydia, Sarah Frances, and Margaret Frances, and his son Norman (Dr. Norman Mor-

rison, for forty-five years chief surgeon of the Santa Fe railroad, a position now held by his son).

"William Mickley, at that time a widower, and, although 51, was of such commanding stature and such prepossessing appearance and manners that he won the heart and hand of young Margaret Frances Morrison, while Frederick Hirth successfully courted Sarah Frances, and married her on Feb. 27, 1868.

"Margaret bore two daughters to her husband, and before the oldest child was three, both parents had died—within six months of each other.

## FAMILY HISTORY

"One girl had been named 'Cora' after Cora Barton (the Bartons were a very influential family in Lyon county in the early days—they later moved to California) and Belle after one of the Bests. Cora Belle was taken into the home of her aunt and uncle Hirth, and she was raised as their own. The other daughter was adopted by a family named Watson, and today is known as Mrs. Jennie Watson Healy, of Arkansas City, Kansas.

"Elizabeth Hirth, finding that she was not able to properly care for the precious bundle of Lincoln keepsakes as her teaching carried her far and wide, and realizing her brother Fred's devotion to Lincoln, she early decided that the logical thing to do was to give them to him; she also urged Margaret to the same course, thus the entire lot became the prized possession of Fred Hirth. (All this transfer of the documents is definitely established by the old letters from these very people.)

"Hirth enlisted in the Civil war in 1861, private, Second Kansas, and was severely wounded—it is traditional history that General Grant himself staunch the flow of blood from that wound—certain it is that Grant was personally interested in this soldier, for he later spoke of him to his president (I have a letter written to Hirth by President Lincoln in which this is confirmed).

"Returning to Emporia as a semi-invalid, Hirth devoted time and patience to compiling the very earliest data on Kansas (in this he was greatly helped by William Mickley) and all his findings were pasted and written into a large scrap book, half filling it. The other half contained every clipping that he could get that related to Lincoln, Grant and the Civil war.

## SCRAPBOOK SOUGHT

"This book contained such authoritative information that it was often referred to when a dispute arose over Kansas or Civil war history. (Unfortunately, this valuable scrapbook has been lost sight of, but relatives have instituted a search for it. It was well-known to many Emporia citizens).

"Frederick Hirth was an austere, introspective type of man who lived among his books and his memories (many times I have heard my great-aunt say that in all the years they lived together she was never really acquainted with him), and few people were intimate with him, except Robert Jeff, the elder, P. G. Hallberg, whose son is a nurseryman in Emporia, and Dr. Norman Morrison.

"Cora Belle, when a child, often saw her uncle exhibit the scrapbook and the old documents which she now realizes were the Lincoln-Rutledge letters, to these cronies, but that meant nothing to her childish mind at the time. All these things were kept in a massive old secretary that dominated the parlor in the Hirth



home on South Commercial street, Emporia, Kansas.

"Mrs. Margie Waterbury, widow of Judge Waterbury, long a prominent figure in Emporia, was a constant visitor in the Hirth home in her girlhood; she has gone on record with the statement that she remembers well the tin box containing these documents, 'had seen it a thousand times,' and knew it to contain the Lincoln-Rutledge documents. (Representative citizens of Emporia have stated that they remember Hirth's possession of Lincoln letters).

"Mrs. Jennie Healy, who spent some time in the Hirth home before Mr. Hirth's death, states that she heard Mr. Hirth speak of these documents and of his wish that they be handed on to the niece he had raised, Cora Belle, now Mrs. Cora de Boyer of Chula Vista, California (my mother). To Dr. Wayland Morrison he gave his discharge papers and his musket, while Mrs. Healy received his carbine which he had carried after he joined the cavalry in the Civil war. The aforementioned letter to Hirth from his president is in reply to Hirth's request for knowledge on the whereabouts of his horse which had carried him in his last battles. Wounded and carried to the hospital, he had lost track of the handsome black, 'General Seigel,' and he grieved over his loss. Fortunately, Mr. Lincoln knew where the horse had been held and he so informs Hirth in that letter—the letter, by the way, dated two days before the assassination.

#### FURNITURE STORED

"Uncle Fred Hirth's death in 1907 was such a blow to my aunt that after a short time she found it impossible to remain in the old home, so, impulsively, she stored different pieces of furniture in the homes of friends, and sought forgetfulness in travel. (The secretary was given to the Hallbergs, who still have it, and someone in Emporia has the old bureau that he made in his furniture factory. It contained a secret compartment and may now hold documents of worth unknown to the present owner).

"Many quilts that she had pieced and feather beds, etc., were given to different relatives; in fact, everything except her money was disposed of long before her death. The money was left to a relative, Miss Georganne Anderson of Bronson, Kan., who cared for her in her final illness.

"When Mrs. Hirth went to California she left the tin box containing the Lincoln letters with her niece, Cora, telling her that it was some keepsakes that Fred set such store by and wanted her to have. However, they were not to be opened or considered the property of Mrs. de Boyer until after her (Mrs. Hirth's) death.

#### VALUE UNKNOWN

"Never dreaming of their value, Mrs. de Boyer did not open the box until some time after Mrs. Hirth had passed away. The family had moved into the town house and had stored the box among other things at the ranch. When Mrs. de Boyer (my mother) realized that she had actual Lincoln documents in her possession, she sent for me at once, and together we went over them carefully and shed many tears over the old, faded and torn treasures. I had later to learn that most of their contents were unknown to the historians, and my first understanding of this brought me to the realization that the collection should be placed before the people of the nation, either in a museum or in the congressional library, but mature judgment made it clear that if the documents were surrounded by a great deal of extra traditional data, which we knew to be available through the Andersons (that branch of our family are directly descended from the Andersons of Anderson's Creek, who are near neighbors and friends of the Lincolns), and through the Holts, especially Uncle Gibson Holt, formerly

of Hartford Kan. who before his death at an advanced age had collected Lincolniana in a small but very direct way its value could be intensified.

"Working in collaboration, my mother and I gleaned every atom of information, by research, by travel, by contact with people who had something worth while to offer, and when the chain of evidence was complete, we wrote it all into a book for the benefit of the people of America, and placed it in the hands of a publisher who studied this background—this history of the documents, even to the minutest detail, and who then called in all the experts deemed necessary to further establish their authenticity, and when the first installments were published we were savagely attacked by some Lincoln authorities who pronounced the letters forgeries even before they had seen the originals, and before even one-half of the evidence was submitted.

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stance—Matilda speaks of the boat bringing people and things from Springfield. Because Springfield was six miles from the river these authorities would have the diary discredited. But with transportation what it was in those days, people resorted to any means possible to get their goods and themselves transferred from one point to another, and the few little flatboats fighting their way down the Sangamon river must have been a God-send to the settlers in that territory.

"In 100 years from now if posterity discovers among my letters some airmail which has reached me in San Diego, they will no doubt, arise and lustily shout 'forgeries!' because they can prove by records that airmail was only carried as far as Los Angeles (about 135 miles from San Diego.) But even in 1928 we were glad to get it that far, relying on train service to bring it the rest of the way.

"It is obvious that anyone clever enough to write the quaint and beautiful passages in those old letters and diaries, would also be gifted with the foresight to consult their histories and select the best known, and easily proved backgrounds for their story. It is just those little things that we of this day cannot explain in those old documents that make me know they are genuine.

#### FEELS IT DUTY

"Being a generation or so removed from those who knew Lincoln personally, I naturally have a better perspective and I feel that we have no right to bury such valuable evidence even though it is mostly of an intimate nature. There is nothing in it that would injure, and there is a great deal that tends to a better understanding of the great martyred president. I feel it a duty to give them to the world—my mother gave them to me for that very purpose, and even though it has involved us in a terrific controversy, and we have become the victims of savage attacks we fully realize that in every affair of national importance there are always two factions—those for and those against. It was thus since the world began. Both sides are right according to their lights, and I harbor no animosity toward the objectionists as long as they fight fairly.

"I am impelled to go on until the whole mass of material is submitted to the citizens of the United States—it is theirs to accept or reject—and such is my faith in the authenticity of every shred of these old mementoes that I feel sure of victory in the end.

"WILMA FRANCES MINOR."



# Expert Hingston Finds Lincoln Papers Forged

Noted Handwriting Au-  
thority Says Minor Col-  
lection Is Spurious

## HAD ACCESS TO THE ATLANTIC ORIGINALS

By JOHN GRIFFIN

It was learned yesterday that William E. Hingston, noted handwriting expert has examined the letters and memoranda in the Minor collection of Lincoln material, which is being published in the Atlantic Monthly, and has submitted a report in which he states that the entire collection is forged.

Officials of the magazine, in the absence of Editor Ellery Sedgwick refused to comment on the report furnished by the handwriting expert. It was said that the examination conducted by Hingston was not asked for officially by the Atlantic, but was requested by a member of that staff for personal information.

To questions as to whether the report had been called to the attention of Mr. Sedgwick, who is at present visiting in Arizona, no reply was forthcoming. Miss Teresa S. Fitzpatrick, circulation manager of the Atlantic, who has assisted Mr. Sedgwick in the preparations for publishing the Minor collection, declined to give the nature of the report or to say whether it would be considered official by the editors.

The Minor collection has received a blast of criticism from historical experts, including Worthington C. Ford,



WILLIAM E. HINGSTON

editor of the Massachusetts Historical Society; Paul M. Angle, executive secretary of the Lincoln Centennial Association of Springfield, Ill.; Dr. William E. Barton and other acknowledged authorities.

According to Miss Fitzpatrick, who has been more intimately connected with the Minor collection and with its publication than any of the magazine staff with the exception of Mr. Sedg-

(Continued on Page Three)

wick, Hingston was not employed by the Atlantic to make an examination of the documents, but was asked by her to look them over for her own personal information.

"I have known Mr. Hingston for some time," she said, "and recently I decided that it would be interesting if he would undertake an examination of the material. He did so, but it should be understood that it was in no way official and was not done for the Atlantic Monthly, but for me personally."

She was asked whether, in view of the acknowledged high standing of Hingston as a handwriting and document expert, his report would be brought officially before the editors of the magazine. She declined to make a statement on that point, and also declined to say whether the report had been brought to the attention of Mr. Sedgwick before he left for Arizona.

#### WORK OF A FORGER

Mr. Hingston confirmed the news that he had examined the material and submitted a report, but he declined to make known the conclusions he reached. It was learned from other sources, however, that his report places absolutely no credence in the authenticity of the Minor letters and memoranda, and states they are the work of a forger.

The expert was under the impression that he was doing the work for the Atlantic Monthly, and said he sent his statement and the report to the Atlantic Monthly. The report was sent a week ago yesterday to the magazine. His bill for the work was also sent to the magazine, not to an individual.

Hingston was first consulted shortly after the publication of the first installment of the Minor collection, which appeared in the December number of the magazine. The material also ran in the January number, and will be completed in the next issue of the magazine.

The same conclusions reached by Hingston in his examination were obtained by an amateur handwriting expert, Maurice H. Hilton, who is a graduate student at Harvard University. The latter found evidence in the formation of certain letters, the spacing, shading and pressure, which led him to believe that all the letters were written by one and the same hand.

#### ACCESS TO ORIGINALS

Hingston, when asked to study the analysis made by Hilton, declined because of his having been employed by the Atlantic to make a study of the entire collection. Hilton's conclusions were drawn from a study of the facsimiles reproduced in the December and January issues of the magazine. Hingston, however, had access to the originals, which are in the possession of the Atlantic.

Other experts who have examined the facsimiles point to several features that tend to show the letters were written by the same hand. Among these features are a similarity in the general appearance of the pages, a close similarity of the speed in the writing, and exact equality of pressure in certain of the letters and an equally exact spacing.

One of the experts confined his study to two letters, one addressed to "My Dearly Valued Ann," and signed, "Abe," and the other addressed to "My beloved Abe," and signed "Ann." As evidence that both were written by the same hand it was pointed out that the salutations are indented at equal distance from the bodies of the respective letters; both sheets are badly torn on the right and scarcely at all on the left; the top and bottom margins are similar; there are 21 lines of writing in each letter; there is a period after both signatures but no punctuations after either salutation, and each letter has but a single paragraph.

#### BELONGS TO MISS MINOR

The Minor collection, which has been subjected to so much criticism and which has been defended with equal force by Mr. Sedgwick, belongs to Miss Wilma Frances Minor. It contains 30

pieces. There are three books. An English version of the Polyglott Bible, dated 1831, bears a Lincoln signature and annotations. On the inside of its cover is written, "Presented to me by Ann Mayes Rutledge, that I may subdue my mind to its valued teachings. I will be diligent in my reading. A. Lincoln."

Another book is "A Practical System of Rhetoric," dated 1829, with Lincoln's signature under quotations from Wordsworth and Shakespeare and with other annotations. The third book is "An Essay on Elocution," dated 1838, also with signature and annotations. There are 16 new letters and several diaries in the collection.

From an historical viewpoint, the collection has been subjected to several attacks. One of the most specific was in a joint statement given out by Worthington C. Ford, Paul M. Angle, and Oliver R. Barrett, the last named being a Chicago lawyer acknowledged as one of the outstanding authorities on Lincolniana.

#### FIVE COUNTS SET UP

In that statement five counts were set against the Minor collection. They were as follows:

1—In a letter purporting to be from Ann Rutledge a reference to Spencer's copy book is made, whereas Spencer's first publication on penmanship was

made 13 years after the death of Rutledge.

2—Martha Calhoun, mentioned in a diary entry written presumably in 1833 or 1834, was not born until nine years after the diary entry.

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4—Section 40 of a land grant is mentioned, and records prove that only 36 sections were allowed to a township.

5—A reference "to some place in Kansas." As a matter of fact, the territory in which the present state of Kansas is located was then known as Missouri Territory or Indian Territory.

Mr. Hingston is nationally known as an expert on handwriting and on documents. He has testified in literally hundreds of court cases, including some of the most celebrated cases in New England. He is the author of several books on the study of handwriting, and for many years has been acquainted with dozens of authentic pieces of Lincoln material.

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*Boston Herald*

Noted Handwriting Authority Says Minor Collection Is Spurious

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*1-12-29*

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## SEDGWICK DROPS LINCOLN ARTICLES

Atlantic Monthly Editor Acts  
After Author Agrees in Cali-  
fornia Conference.

### HIS CONFIDENCE 'SHAKEN'

But He Will Continue Investiga-  
tion In Emporia, Kan., and  
Chicago and Springfield, Ill.

1929

*Special to The New York Times.*

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Jan. 21.—  
Ellery Sedgwick, editor, and Nelson  
J. Peabody, publisher, of The Atlantic  
Monthly have announced here that  
the series of Abraham Lincoln art-  
icles now running in that publica-  
tion will be withdrawn because of  
the dispute over the authenticity of  
reputed Lincoln documents incorpo-  
rated in the articles.

Mr. Sedgwick said that he and Mr.  
Peabody had been here for several  
days in conference with Wilma  
Frances Miner, author of the articles,  
and were going to Emporia, Kan., to  
interview others said to have direct  
knowledge of the documents involved.  
From Emporia they said they planned  
to go on to Chicago and Springfield,  
Ill.

A written statement issued here by  
Mr. Sedgwick said:

"Wilma Frances Miner, author of  
the Lincoln articles now running in  
The Atlantic Monthly, made the fol-  
lowing statement today:

"In view of the serious criticism  
offered against the authenticity of  
the Lincoln material now appearing  
over my signature in The Atlantic  
Monthly, I now formally withdraw  
the same from further publication  
until such time as in my judgment  
the story can be absolutely proved.  
To this end, I shall devote myself  
with energy and I believe with  
success."

"Mr. Sedgwick, editor of The At-  
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following statement:

"With a full sense of my respon-  
sibility in printing in the Atlantic  
Monthly a history of Lincoln's rela-  
tions with Ann Rutledge, based on  
upward of thirty unpublished letters  
and other exhibits belonging to Miss  
Wilma Frances Miner of San Diego,  
I have made a very careful personal  
investigation in various parts of the  
country, examining evidence of every  
sort and description.

"Convinced that the material lacks  
the authenticity which I have pub-  
licly ascribed to it, I wish to make  
equally public the withdrawal of  
previous expressions of absolute con-  
fidence, now shaken.

"I am actively engaged in the  
accumulation of fresh facts in Los  
Angeles, Emporia and elsewhere and  
propose at the earliest possible  
moment to make a full presentation  
of what has come and may still come  
to light."

"ELLERY SEDGWICK."

## THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY TACKLES MR. HEARST

The time is now ripe for a solemn lecture en-  
titled, "What Is Happening to American Periodicals?"

For the staid Atlantic Monthly, a monument of  
conservatism, has suddenly gone yellow. Mr. Hearst  
himself could hardly have done the job more thor-  
oughly. Forged documents and cooked-up letters  
had come to be considered somewhat in the nature of  
a Hearst copyright, but no more, no more. Whereas  
the great William Randolph was in the habit of  
displaying false communications of various petty  
officials of one country or another, the Atlantic Month-  
ly has now gone the whole distance and printed, as  
authentic, letters supposed to have been written by  
Abraham Lincoln but actually, according to numer-  
ous scholars who ought to know, produced by some  
clever penman who shall ever remain nameless.

The world must be tumbling about the ears of  
some thirty thousand or so subscribers of The Atlan-  
tic. It is almost as though President Coolidge had  
suddenly stood on the capitol steps and delivered a  
eulogy of Lenine and Trotzky. My, my, they say  
the editors of the New York Mirror and the Chicago  
American haven't been the same since the first of  
the letters was published.

We may look for developments in the future.  
Merely as a suggestion, the Atlantic editors might  
publish, as the next item in accordance with their  
changed policy, something known as "A Full Con-  
fession, With Technical Details," by Dr. Amante  
Rongetti.

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CHICAGO EIGHTS ILL STAR (W)  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1929.

## THE LINCOLN-RUTLEDGE CORRESPONDENCE.

Wilma Frances Miner, who is the source from whom The  
Atlantic Monthly obtained the much controverted Lincoln-Rutledge  
letters, defends them over her signature and states that she believes  
them to be authentic. We have no reason to doubt her sincerity.  
She probably believes they were written by Abraham Lincoln and  
Ann Rutledge who handed them to each other or sent them through  
the post office of the hamlet of New Salem. But we have known  
persons, many of them, who believed sincerely they were the  
Messiah. They have carried on freely and have converted many to  
their cause but that has not quite established them in the position  
they attempted to preempt. Miss Miner's sincerity in her opinion  
does not answer any of the arguments advanced to prove the letters  
are spurious. All the evidence points in one direction. The editor  
of The Atlantic Monthly makes a very feeble case for himself and  
his decision to print them as genuine. The author makes an even  
weaker presentation. Against them evidence accumulates and the  
authority back of it can not be discounted. The general public that  
has showed a keen interest in the subject displays no manifestation  
of loyalty to the magazine. As far as we can ascertain sentiment,  
it sides with the men who have advanced such conclusive proof  
that the correspondence is bogus and we may confidently predict  
that before long the whole truth as to its origin will be made known.

SPRINGFIELD ILL JOUR  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1929.



# BARTON CALLS LETTERS FROM LINCOLN FRAUD

*Boston Herald  
Dec. 11-28*

Biographer Declares Magazine Has Been Im-  
posed On  
*One might expect this*  
DENIES ASSERTING  
MISSIVES GENUINE

(Copyright, 1928, Boston Publishing Co.)

NASHVILLE, Tenn., Dec. 9—Dr. William E. Barton, who is spending this quarter at Vanderbilt University, lecturing in the school of religion, was seen by a Herald representative and asked his opinion of the Lincoln manuscripts now appearing in the Atlantic Monthly. He said:

The question does not surprise me. I am receiving it in every mail. I have not seen the originals of these documents; I missed them at both ends. I could have wished to postpone answer to the question till I had seen them. But I have some evidence in addition to that which is before the public, and, since it has been stated in print that I regard these documents as genuine, I must say that I do not so regard them.

I was informed of the existence of this body of material about a year ago, possibly somewhat longer; the correspondence is at Foxboro and I am not sure of the date. I heard the news with an open mind. The Rutledges and Camerons moved on to California, and it would be there if anywhere such letters might presumably be discovered. It was in California I discovered the only letter known ever to have been written to Ann Rutledge, that by her brother, David, while he was a student in Illinois College. Neither of Ann's sisters, Nan Pre-witt or Sallie Saunders, knew of any other letter which she had ever received. I published this in "The Women Lincoln Loved." It still stands as the only genuine letter known to have been written to her. It belonged to her sister, Sallie, from whom I obtained it.

Late last summer I was shown photographs of several of the letters that are now appearing in the Atlantic. I declined to express a judgment until I had seen the originals. The originals were then in the mail. I have

been in California since and have seen more photographs of these documents, but the originals were then in Boston. One naturally likes to defer a published judgment till he has before him the entire evidence. But I must not be quoted as believing in the genuineness of these letters and diary. I was in grave doubt from the beginning, and I am now certain that they are a fraud. The Atlantic has been imposed upon.

I am deep in much earlier documents, and they are of recent discovery. They are 200 years old, some of them older. I have some discoveries of my own soon to be published, and they will involve some surprises. I have been forced to deal much more at length than I had expected with questions of Lincoln's backgrounds and antecedents, and I am soon to publish a good big volume entitled "The Lineage of Lincoln." It should be out by the time of his birthday.

I am having a very good time this fall lecturing in the school of religion in Vanderbilt University.

expect to go abroad again at the end of January and get back for my summer with my children and grandchildren under the pines at Foxboro, Mass. Nashville is a very attractive city. I am happy to be here for a time. But as soon as I return from across the sea and have a little whirl among the colleges at commencement time, I want to get back to the vicinity of Boston. The charm of New England is something one does not outgrow.



# ATLANTIC HALTS LINCOLN SERIES

*Boston Herald & Monday Jan. 21-1929*  
**Sedgwick Finds Material  
Lacks Authenticity He  
Ascribed to It**

## MISS MINOR TO TRY TO PROVE IT GENUINE

[Special Dispatch to The Herald]

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Jan. 20—Ellery Sedgwick, editor, and Nelson J. Peabody, publisher, of the Atlantic Monthly announced here today that the series of Abraham Lincoln articles now running in that publication would be withdrawn because of the dispute over the authenticity of asserted Lincoln documents incorporated in the articles.

Mr. Sedgwick said that he and Mr. Peabody had been here several days in conference with Wilma Frances Minor, author of the articles, and were leaving tonight for Emporia, Kas., to interview personally others said to have direct knowledge of the documents involved. From Emporia, they said they planned to visit Chicago and Springfield, Ill.

A written statement issued here by Mr. Sedgwick said:

Wilma Frances Minor, author of the Lincoln articles now running in the Atlantic Monthly made the following statement today:

In view of the serious criticism offered against the authenticity of the Lincoln material now appearing over my signature in the Atlantic Monthly, I now formally withdraw the same from further publication until such time as in my judgment the story can be absolutely proved. To this end, I shall devote myself with energy and I believe with success. WILMA FRANCES MINOR.

Mr. Sedgwick, commenting on this, made the following statement:

With a full sense of my responsibility in printing in the Atlantic Monthly a history of Lincoln's relations with Ann Rutledge, based on upwards of 30 unpublished letters and other exhibits belonging to Miss Wilma Frances Minor of San Diego, I have made very careful personal investigation in various parts of the country examining evidence of every sort and description. Convinced that the material lacks the authenticity which I have publicly ascribed to it, I wish to make equally public the withdrawal of previous expressions of absolute confidence now shaken.

I am actively engaged in the accumulation of fresh facts in Los Angeles, Emporia and elsewhere, and propose at the earliest possible moment to make a full presentation of what has come and may still come to light.

## A WISE RETREAT

Elery Sedgwick has done a wise thing in discontinuing the unfinished series of articles on the alleged love letters of Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge, and a brave and manly thing in acknowledging his mistake in ascribing authenticity to documents which he now believes to be fraudulent.

In a brief statement, Mr. Sedgwick says:

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On their very face, the documents paraded in the first two articles of this series were at least open to grave doubts. Much of the matter ~~was based upon an alleged diary kept~~

by one Matilda Cameron of the backwoods settlement of New Salem in 1833. The very act of writing must have been exceedingly painful for this young woman, whose every other word was misspelled atrociously—perhaps too artfully—yet there is an extraordinary length of it. Considerable tress was placed upon memoranda called "Lincoln Memo," said to have been written in 1848 by Sally Caloun, recalling her father's impressions of Lincoln at New Salem fifteen years before and set down at the suggestion of her father, who "predicted great things in the future for Lincoln." No one, unless it was Mary Todd, ever expected "great things" of Abraham Lincoln at any time up until his death, and it was not until years afterward that the world and its contemporaries awoke to know that a great man had lived among them.

The Lincoln-Rutledge letters themselves were astonishing if only because they passed between two persons living in a hamlet of twenty cabins, where there was no need to write. All this is aside from the testimony of experts that the "Lincoln letters" are forgeries. The whole deplorable incident appears to have been based upon a greatly exaggerated affair between Lincoln and this red-headed girl, and the Atlantic Monthly is not the first to have been led into making ridiculous statements

about it.



Feb. 1929

## WITH CHARITY FOR ALL

THE *Atlantic* is a monthly publication which goes to press many weeks before its appearance on the news stands. Persons who expect us to speak with the celerity of a daily or weekly paper are unreasonable. Realizing the interest of the public, we add these pages of explanation a week after the text of the magazine has already gone to press.

The *Atlantic* began the publication of the series of articles entitled 'Lincoln the Lover' in the belief, first, that the original documents on which the series was based were genuine, and second, that they were of public and historic value. Widespread controversy followed the appearance of the first article in December, and the authenticity of the documents was questioned. The *Atlantic* has with its best intelligence studied each criticism as it appeared, and from the beginning has taken the view that the common object of ourselves and our critics should be, not to prove either side of a case, but to arrive at the truth regarding the documents in question.

So far as the criticisms based upon the December article are concerned, we felt, and still feel, that they are clearly susceptible of two opinions. We prepared a statement which we expected to publish embodying our conviction to that effect and the reasons for it. But with the appearance of the January *Atlantic* two specific criticisms were launched, both concerning one letter printed in the article in that issue, which we are not able to refute. The letter in question is dated New Salem, May 9, 1834; it is addressed to John Calhoun and signed 'A. Lincoln.' The letter begins: —

DEAR FRIEND JOHN

if you have in your possession or can tell me where you left the Certificate of Survey of Joshua Blackburn's Claim, there seems some controversy between him and Green concerning that North East quarter of Section 40 — you remember?

It has been pointed out that as early as 1785 the Federal Government established a system of surveying public lands which has remained unchanged. According to this

system, townships were laid out in tracts six miles by six, with sections each one mile square, making thirty-six sections in all. Where a lake, Indian Reservation, or other irregularity occurred, a township might contain less than thirty-six sections, but under no circumstances could it contain more. This evidence seems decisive unless it should be possible that some local variation might occur in the application of the system. To determine this point we went much further than the mere examination of the laws governing the survey of public lands; actual section maps were consulted showing the townships as they had been surveyed in the very region under question — Sangamon County, Illinois. From all such maps as we have been able to consult it appears that no variation occurred. Since John Calhoun was official surveyor of Sangamon County, and Lincoln was his assistant, it could only be concluded that Lincoln could not have made such a reference as that occurring in the disputed letter, to the 'North East quarter of Section 40.'

In the same letter occurs the sentence: 'the "Bixbys" are leaving this week for some place in Kansas.' Kansas was organized as a territory in 1854; in the twenty years previous it was an Indian land, where a few whites — missionaries, traders, and land squatters — had established themselves. The name 'Kansas' during this time seems to have been restricted to the Kansas River. A reference to 'some place in Kansas,' therefore, implying a coherent territory to which a name had been given, seems a serious flaw in a letter dated 1834.

We have taken all possible pains to study these two questions, and have consumed many days in doing so, but the only conclusion which we are able to reach is that the letter in which these two references occur does not seem to be supported by the facts. We should be grateful for advice from any quarter regarding these or other points at issue. Under the circumstances, the *Atlantic* will of course not proceed with its plan to publish the whole collection in book form

without being able to substantiate it. We are guided in this decision by what appear to be irrefutable facts. To other criticisms which have been made there are answers.

The same statement, for example, which advanced the two points just cited contained these words: 'In the undated diary entry, written presumably in 1833 or 1834, Matilda Cameron remarks, "Marthy Calhoned Ann sum new patern of kroschay and she is going to tech me." Martha Calhoun, sixth child of John Calhoun, was born January 9, 1843, about nine years after the diary entry.'

True enough, but, a fact overlooked by our critics, John Calhoun also had a sister Martha, to whom, so far as we are able to see, the reference naturally applies.

The same critics make this statement, which can be answered partially, but we admit not effectually: 'In a letter purporting to be from Ann Rutledge a reference to Spencer's copy book is included, whereas Spencer's first publication on penmanship was made thirteen years after the death of Ann Rutledge.' Spencer was born in 1800 and began teaching penmanship at the age of fifteen. In 1833, when the letter in question would have been written, he had been teaching penmanship eighteen years. It seems well within possibility that he might have published, or at least printed, copy books or leaflets which have escaped notice, although the first formal Spencerian treatise appeared in 1848.

One explanation of its policy in seeking to establish the authenticity of the documents the *Atlantic* would like to make. From the beginning we felt that a forgery a generation or two ago was altogether unlikely. We accordingly sought to investigate as thoroughly as we could the age of the collection as it lay in our hands. We accepted the assurance of the chemists that the paper was old and that the ink had been on it for a long time. We next sought to learn all we could about the reputed owner a generation past, Frederick Hirth, of Emporia, Kansas. We wrote to Washington for Hirth's war record, and ascertained through the Adjutant-General's office that he had twice served as a volunteer, and had been pensioned for wounds received in action. We ascertained from William Allen White, of Emporia,

that Hirth had been a well-known and respected citizen there, and a prominent Mason until his death in 1907. We next endeavored to find out whether Hirth had ever spoken of possessing Lincoln letters. In this connection several letters which we have in our files are of interest.

A letter written to the publishers from Emporia by Mrs. Howard Dunlap contains the following words: 'I know of Mr. Frederick Hirth. He was a very old settler here. I know he had some letters that Lincoln had written that he prized very much. I never saw them, but he repeatedly told his friends of them.'

A letter from Mr. C. W. Cleaver, recorder of the Knights Templar in Emporia, contains these words: —

All the Masons that lived about the time Fred Hirth was on earth have gone to their reward, and none of the later date knew anything about him. I was a kid of about twenty-one or so and Fred was an old man and of very little interest to me. I knew him quite well, but was never in his home. I have a sort of nebulous recollection of one night in the Temple a lot of us sitting round talking of cahbages and kings and a few other things, and in the course of the gab I have a faint recollection of hearing Ahraham Lincoln talked of, and among other things Fred Hirth saying that he had a letter or letters from Lincoln, but the recollection is so faint that I could not give you a word of the conversation.

In a letter addressed to the publisher by Wayland A. Morrison, M.D., of Los Angeles, a distant cousin of Miss Minor and nephew of Frederick Hirth's wife, are the words: —

I have only a faint recollection of Mr. Hirth having some of the material that is in your possession, being a small boy and it having made very little impression on my mind. I could not make a definite statement in this regard.

A letter to the publisher from Mrs. John Healy, the sister of Miss Minor's mother, is dated from Arkansas City. Mrs. Healy writes: —

I can speak with authority, having known Aunt Fanny (Sarah Morrison Hirth) and Uncle Fred (Frederick Hirth) intimately for years. Several years ago, while convalescing from a period of illness, I was in their home about two months, and during that time Uncle Fred and I discovered we were mutual admirers of Washington Irving, and while he was very reserved and



taciturn in his attitude towards people, he grew quite voluble and confidential during our reading and discussions of Irving, and he told me about having some of Lincoln's and Ann Rutledge's love letters in his possession, and he intended leaving them to Cora — my sister — his musket to Wayland Morrison, and his rifle to me, for keepsakes. He gave me the rifle just before I came home.

Some time after his death, Aunt Fanny was in my home for three months, and during that time she mentioned several keepsakes she was going to give my sister, including a 'Packet of old letters Fred wanted her to have' and I know Aunt Fanny took them to California and gave them to my sister.

These letters seem adequate testimony to the fact of Hirth's possession of letters and 'keepsakes' which he described to his friends and to members of his family as written by or associated with Lincoln. Any reader can judge for himself of the likelihood of the committal of so complicated a forgery a full generation ago. When the first of Miss Minor's articles led to immediate criticism, we felt justified in asking for suspended judgment. This was the more true as some of the early criticisms did not seem to us of serious moment. We should like to quote from the statement previously alluded to, which we prepared for publication after studying criticisms based upon the December article: —

In general, criticism of the collection falls under three heads. The first consideration is the handwriting of the documents purporting to be Lincoln's. The *Atlantic* has departed from a tradition of seventy years against the use of illustrations to place before its readers reproductions of three of the Lincoln letters in Miss Minor's collection, so that some idea might be formed of the appearance of the original documents. Even so, our purpose was partly defeated, for the two Lincoln letters in the December issue were reproduced by the method of line engraving, which inevitably sharpened and altered the writing; a slight reduction in size to fit the *Atlantic* page was also necessary. The frontispiece of the January issue, containing Lincoln's letter which begins 'My dearly valued Ann,' is a reproduction by photostat, and a much more accurate representation of its original. But examina-

tion which has not the original documents themselves as its immediate object cannot be final. It is for this reason that before publication the *Atlantic* secured Miss Minor's permission for ultimate public display of the collection.

The second type of criticism applied to the documents has concerned particular traits and characteristics of the letters as compared with known Lincoln correspondence. To illustrate criticisms of this sort, let us select some outstanding examples which have been brought to bear by a noted Lincoln scholar.

1. 'Rarely, if ever, did Lincoln write the name of the addressee in the lower left-hand corner of his letters.' Even a casual and fractional survey of Lincoln's correspondence would show three examples of this practice, which lie before us as we write: (a) Lincoln's letter to Mrs. O. H. Browning about his affair with Mary Owens, quoted in Barton, *The Women Lincoln Loved*, pages 205-209; (b) letter from Lincoln (original in Barrett collection) to William H. Herndon, speaking of a speech by Mr. Stephens of Georgia; (c) letter from Lincoln to a newspaper or magazine publisher, written in 1835 while Lincoln was postmaster of New Salem; reproduced in Tarbell, *Early Life of Abraham Lincoln*, page 189, from original in the collection of Mr. C. F. Gunther.

2. ' . . . until the last few years of his life he habitually used a short dash instead of a period.' In the Lincoln correspondence from other sources which we have seen, dashes predominate, but dots are found. In Miss Minor's collection dots predominate, but dashes are found. It would appear that Lincoln's practice was inconsistent, and that generalization is insecure.

3. 'The salutation of the letter of July 22, 1848, — "Dear Old Friend," — is totally unlike Lincoln, who rarely deviated from the formal in beginning his letters. . . . The conclusion, "Yours forever," is as foreign as the salutation.' Part of the peculiar value of Miss Minor's collection is its intimacy, in which it differs from other correspondence of Lincoln. This difference cannot with fairness be used *a priori* against the collection. Curiously enough, however, a letter is before us containing an intimate

salutation and a form of signature identical with that criticized as unlike Lincoln. A letter to be found on page 31 of *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln*, by Gilbert A. Tracy, is addressed to Richard S. Thomas. It begins 'Friend Richard' and concludes 'yours forever.'

The third type of criticism is historical. An elaborate argument is advanced that Calhoun could not have visited Gentryville at a time compatible with the statement in Lincoln's letter dated July 22, 1848, because court records establish his presence in Springfield. But the argument is based on the premise that Calhoun must have visited Gentryville on a given date, whereas Lincoln mentions no date. He simply writes, 'Jed was here and called on me about a month ago. he told me of your trip to Gentryville. . . .' The visit may have taken place at any time, and bears no necessary relation to the date of Jed's visit.

The existence of Sarah ('Sally') Calhoun, daughter of John Calhoun, to whom several of the Lincoln letters are addressed, has been called in question. Sally Calhoun's memorandum is one of the prominent documents in Miss Minor's collection. Doubt of her reality is based on the absence of her name from the list of John Calhoun's children as given in John Carroll Power's *History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County, Illinois*. But consultation of this volume reveals that this very list of John Calhoun's children contains a conspicuous error. Two of his children are reported as having been born three months apart. This error throws doubt on the infallibility of the list. That one of the daughters of John Calhoun may have been called Sarah, although not so baptized, is a possibility which every reader will recognize, and is strengthened by the fact that their mother's name was Sarah. As affirmative evidence of the existence of Sally Calhoun we have not only her memorandum, but two letters signed by her, and a letter written by Miss Minor's own grandmother, Margaret Morrison, in which she mentions Sally Calhoun by name and speaks of receiving from her part of the Lincoln collection under discussion. (On the other hand, it is fair to mention the supplementary evidence advanced by our critics in the form of a letter written

by Mrs. Adele P. McCord, only surviving granddaughter of John Calhoun. Mrs. McCord says that she does not recall that any of her aunts was ever called 'Sally.')

Obviously, every criticism advanced against the documents cannot be individually answered by the *Atlantic*. We think we have shown that typical criticisms advanced hitherto are fully open to rejoinder.

Finally, we should like to recur to the circumstances under which the Minor Collection was published. At our request, Miss Minor and her mother, Mrs. DeBoyer, came on from California to discuss the material. They remained in Boston several days, and repeated conferences were held with members of the firm of Little, Brown and Company, prospective publishers of the book, and with six members of the *Atlantic* staff. The contract made based its considerable returns upon the acceptance by the public generally of the material published in book form. Miss Minor courted the fullest publicity for her material, and in the eleven weeks preceding publication the letters were shown to chemists, to biographers, and to a number of individuals whose judgment was deemed of value.

It is a pertinent fact that among all the people who saw the original books and letters, only one person, a scholar of long experience, expressed doubt, and that doubt was based upon the possibility—which he regarded as only a possibility—of the material having been fabricated sometime before 1900.

To us the letters seemed to furnish a very interesting explanation of the unexplained change which came over Lincoln's character in the formative years, and we think that any person whose prejudice does not blind his judgment will find in this material—particularly in the diary of Mat Cameron—evidence that if it is fabricated, an artist's hand has been at work.

For the criticism of scholars and students, no matter how unfavorable, we are not ungrateful, for the truth in this matter is a source of deep interest. We do feel that multifarious criticism by persons quite ignorant of the merits of the controversy proves once again how inequitably sense and intelligence are distributed in this world.



## Outlook and Independent

February 6, 1929.

### ▶▶ That Lincoln Feature Again

THE EDITOR of the "Atlantic Monthly" now frankly and honorably admits his agreement with certain critics that two of the statements in letters in "Lincoln the Lover" are irreconcilable with historic fact, and publicly withdraws the "previous expressions of absolute confidence, now shaken."

The two points that Mr. Sedgwick

cannot reconcile with historical fact are: first, that Lincoln in a letter should mention "Section 40" as the name of a piece of land, whereas there could not possibly be over thirty-six sections under the Federal system of surveying public lands, which existed then and exists now; secondly, that in the same letter he talked of people going to "some place in Kansas," whereas there was no territory or well-known region of that name at that time.

It is beyond question also that other criticisms have at least enough semblance of being in contradiction to fact that even though Mr. Sedgwick, the editor, thinks they are capable of explanation, the "Lincoln feature" at the moment is under a cloud.

The question arises why the scrutiny which the letters and documents, as we were told by the "Atlantic," underwent before publication, did not disclose some of these weak points. We believe not a single recognized hand-writing expert was quoted in the story of the find as saying that the hand-writing was Lincoln's, and there was a wide difference of opinion among authorities as to the Lincoln of the letters corresponding in manner, degree of culture or mode of expression to the Lincoln of 1834 as shown by other evidence.

If this is true, before, not after, publication was the right time for the searching examination it is now pro-

posed to institute. Probably a commission of literary, historical and penmanship experts to examine every document and every witness available is not possible. But nothing less, it would seem, is likely to establish the "Love Letters" as genuine in every part.

### Letters

## LINCOLN LETTERS

By WORTHINGTON C. FORD

If one may judge by a sentence or two in the Atlantic Monthly for April, the editor has come to accept the belief that the Lincoln-Rutledge letters are not authentic.

In Mr. Angle's article we read: "Almost every item revealed such serious flaws that belief in the genuineness of the entire group became untenable. Recognizing this, the editor of the Atlantic not only published a statement withdrawing former expressions of confidence in the collection, but asked me, as one of those active in attacking its claims to credence, to state the case against it." In the "Contributors' Column" is the following: "The editor of the Atlantic, after talking with him (Angle) in Chicago, in the course of an extended investigation of his own, gave Mr. Angle the information he had acquired and invited him to contribute the reasoned estimate which appears in this number." No better hand than Mr. Angle's could be selected to state the objections to the collection and he has assembled with skill and force the serious, fatal, defects of the documents. The facts were known in December, but the Atlantic chose to persist in its publication—and investigate after.

This is as close to an open and frank admission on the part of the Atlantic as we can expect, and so far as it goes we accept it as closing the incident. The Herald has had but one object from the first publication of the papers, to establish their truth or falsity. Its columns have been open to both sides, and if it has leaned towards the opinion of the Lincoln experts who criticised the letters it regarded the weight of their testimony to be greater than that offered by the Atlantic. In fact, within two weeks after the first installment appeared, Mr. Sedgwick did not have a supporter of moment, and those on whom he had rested left him, claiming that they had been misunderstood.

Avoiding the appearance of persecuting, the Herald has suppressed much that came to it of a nature personal or mere repetitions, and has awaited the results of the too-long-deferred investigation by Mr. Sedgwick. Those results do not appear in Mr. Angle's article, but we trust that the admission by the editor quoted above may mean that he bows to the inevitable and thus ends an incident which was deplorably mismanaged from the beginning, and has aroused discussion upon many points, not least of which has been one of the ethics of journalism.

BOSTON HERALD 3-25-29



# THE BOSTON HERALD

MONDAY, MARCH 25, 1929

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THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY  
COMPANY PUBLISHERS



8 ARLINGTON STREET  
BOSTON

## The Atlantic Monthly

April 17, 1931

Professor John B. Macharg  
Lawrence College  
Appleton, Wisconsin

Dear Professor Macharg:

Evidently you did not see the announcement which Mr. Sedgwick immediately cleared through the Associated Press the moment that he found the Lincoln Letters not to be authentic.

By consulting your file you will also find that Mr. Paul Angle who was instrumental in helping us in this matter, wrote a paper at our request giving the facts.

We are very happy to welcome you back to the Atlantic family. The Whiteoaks are as alluring as ever, and this serial will be bulwarked by many articles which we know will have a particular appeal for you.

Very truly yours,  
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY COMPANY

*I. S. Paley*  
Circulation Manager



13 June 1931

T. Staley Pateuch, Esq.  
Circulation Manager  
Atlantic Monthly  
BOSTON

Dear Sir :

College closed , I have time to catch up with some of my neglected correspondence, and your letter of Apr. 17, is before me.

I think I have before me most of the essential articles in connection with the Atlantic Forgeries and, ofcourse, know well of the work and views of Angle, expressed in print and viva voce.

The thing that especially annoyed me and others, I think, was the note in connection with Angle in the issue of Apr. 1929. Then, the fact that the letters were forgeries was established beyond cavil and a definite statement from you would have been more fitting than suggestions which seemed to leave the matter still in doubt.

I presume you view the matter as closed. I wish you might find a way to tell the full story of those forgeries. I think it would make an article of real interest and that it would be a good thing for the old ATLANTIC. I think Barton knew the whole story and said he knew the author and circumstances surrounding the publication in detail, but that danger of suits for someone made it unwise to publish. Please give us an article if you can on the ways and means of fooling the ATLANTIC. As I have said, I sincerely believe it would be a good stroke for the ATLANTIC.

Kindly send my ATLANTIC FOR Aug. and Sept. to Bailey, Colo.

Truly yours

OFFICE OF  
THE EDITOR



8 ARLINGTON STREET  
BOSTON, MASS.

*The Atlantic Monthly*

16 June, 1931.

Dear Dr. MacHarg:--

Thanks for your letter of June 13th. A paper just such as you describe was prepared in this office and ready for publication, but in reviewing it with care it seemed to involve so many personalities and to savor so much of persecution of unfortunate people that we thought it more dignified to close the episode with the very plain evidence of Mr. Angle.

Dr. Barton, of whom you speak, was consulted in the first instance. It was not until evidence began to accumulate that he grew suspicious of certain factors in a complicated story which made it unwise for him to write such an article as you suggest.

Yours faithfully,

Dr. John B. MacHarg,  
Lawrence College,  
Appleton,  
Wisconsin.



# LINCOLN FORGERIES TRICK COLLECTORS

Expert Fakes by a New Hand  
Appear Here, in Chicago  
and in New England.

UNUSUAL IN THEIR LENGTH

Spurious Legal Documents Are  
Betrayed by Ink—Sheets  
From Old Ledgers Used.

Abraham Lincoln forgeries of such exceptional cleverness as to deceive several collectors and dealers have appeared recently in New York, New England and Chicago, it has been learned here.

These are among the most deceptive Lincoln forgeries that have come to light in many years. The source has not been discovered, so far as could be learned yesterday. A man who visited several dealers in attempts to sell the spurious documents is understood to have been questioned, but it was not revealed whether he was himself the forger or only a salesman. It was reported that prosecution might develop.

All the spurious documents have turned up in the last few weeks, from sufficiently varied sources to indicate wide circulation of the forgeries. In one instance, at least, the forger has tried his hand on an autograph other than that of Lincoln and succeeded in doing a plausible Poe manuscript. Lincoln and Poe autographs are among the most valuable and sought for of all American autographs.

## Long Legal Documents.

So far the Lincoln forgeries appear to have been confined to legal documents, supposedly drawn up and signed by Lincoln in his own name or in that of one of his law firms. A feature of the spurious documents is their length. Most forgers confine their efforts to short letters or documents. One of the fake documents seen yesterday extended to some 700 words and contained three forged Lincoln signatures.

It was learned that Thomas F. Madigan, authority on autographs and Lincolniana, had been called into consultation recently to determine the genuineness of some of the questioned documents. When asked yesterday about the forgeries, Mr. Madigan said that they were among the cleverest he had ever seen.

# FORGERIES OF LINCOLN LETTERS BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

*to his (meant by said Auditor, said pretended  
claim on behalf of the United States, over  
the said interest bonds—*

*A. Lincoln p. p.*

*Is the Clerk of the court & let this be filed with the  
Clerk of the court record of the above entitled cause—*

*Springfield,*

*A. Lincoln  
June 1<sup>st</sup> 1857*

A Facsimile of One of the Spurious Documents Which Have Deceived Collectors and Dealers.

*At the request of Mr. Crosby, I most cheerfully  
state that I appear fully in the foregoing certificate  
of Judge—It is thought not improper for me to  
add, that I am the Representative to Congress  
for the District in which Mr. Crosby resides—  
A. Lincoln*

A Genuine Lincoln Document Showing the True Handwriting and Signature of the Emancipator.

"One would almost think that Robert Spring, the notorious forger of Washington autographs about the time of the Civil War, had come back to life and turned his attention to Lincoln," Mr. Madigan said. "These forgeries certainly compare favorably with Spring's most expert work."

"The present forger has cleverly extracted sheets from old ledgers bearing watermarks prior to the dates of the documents he has faked. So there is nothing about the paper to arouse suspicion except that it is slightly heavier than that usually employed by Lincoln and is not ruled. Lincoln generally used ruled paper in his legal manuscripts."

"Then, too, there is no sign whatever of oxidation of the ink in these documents. The ink does not show through the paper, as it frequently does in authentic old documents as a result of the oxidation of the ink over a long period of time. The forger has used ink with a slightly brownish tinge but there is an evenness of color in the writing that is lacking in authentic Lincoln legal documents."

## Imitation Is Uneven.

The writing itself is an excellent imitation in some spots and in others is poor, according to Mr. Madigan. "Surprisingly enough, the signatures themselves don't quite click, although there are many words and lines in the main body of the documents that are well done."

The forger evidently has studied the published works of Lincoln, for the fake documents are entirely plausible as to content.

About a year ago some inferior Lincoln forgeries appeared on the market but were so poorly done that they were recognized at once by those at all familiar with Lincoln's writing. That forger confined himself to letters. The present forger is evidently not the one of a year ago, since the present fakes are much better. One of the mysteries in the present case is the forger's reason for risking long documents, which give wide opportunity for study and comparison with authentic autograph manuscripts.

"The forger of autographs generally gives himself away in some detail readily recognized by those who have studied the subject," Mr. Madigan said. "No matter how clever, he never quite covers his tracks."

Feb 8, 1934



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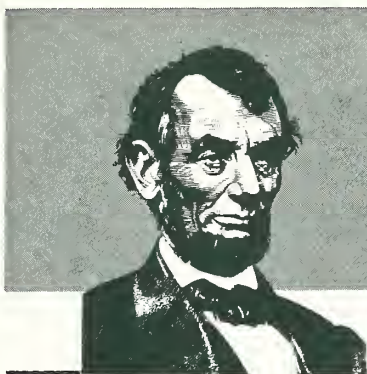
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# Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor  
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1583

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

January, 1970

## The Atlantic Monthly Fiasco

About forty-one years ago (December, 1928; January, 1929 and February, 1929) there appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* a serialized story entitled "Lincoln The Lover." The first installment was heralded with a four page introduction by the magazine editor, Ellery Sedgwick, titled "The Discovery — A New Storehouse of Lincoln Material." The author of the articles and the owner of the alleged authentic manuscripts was Wilma Frances Minor of San Diego, California.

What an historical scoop this was! Lincoln's love letters! How the romanticists yearned for authentic facts of the Lincoln-Rutledge episode! "How their mouths must have watered as Mr. Sedgwick told them of the letters, passionate and real, which Abraham wrote to Ann and Ann to Abraham." Then too, "there (were) other letters of Lincoln's own, telling of the love he bore Ann Rutledge."

Those collectors of Lincolniana who have these three issues of *The Atlantic Monthly* could spend an enjoyable hour re-reading the Minor articles. Perhaps they would immediately come to the conclusion that, with all of our present knowledge of the Sixteenth President, such a hoax, be it innocent or otherwise, could never again be perpetrated on the American public.

The readers of *The Atlantic Monthly* must have been a little surprised in December, 1928, when the magazine appeared on the bookstalls "with a tiny black-rimmed portrait (Lincoln) breaking the familiar contour of its buff-colored cover." Inside they found the first installment of what purported to be "a new storehouse of Lincoln material."

In the introduction Mr. Sedgwick explained precisely how this material came to *The Atlantic Monthly* through Miss Wilma Frances Minor, the owner. Naturally, the editor made tests to determine authenticity; tests by historians, tests by chemists and tests by handwriting experts.

His investigators supposedly succeeded in tracing the material back to a date approaching 1866 to a Mr. Frederick W. Hirth of Emporia, Kansas, a Civil War veteran. Miss Minor, however, was able to provide a fascinating account as to how the collection proceeded down through the years from the Cameron family to Sally Calhoun to *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Sedgwick and a "few others" were convinced that the material was authentic. However, the editor admitted that "only one person, a scholar of long experience, expressed doubt, and that doubt was based upon the possibility — which he regarded as only a possibility — of the material having been fabricated sometime before 1900."

Part I of the serial bore the title "The Setting — New Salem," part II, "The Courtship" and part III, "The Tragedy." The third title was prophetic because the publication of this serialized narrative was not only a so-called tragedy suffered by Lincoln, but also one suffered by the magazine as well. The harassed editor inserted a four page statement under the heading "With Charity For All" following not the last chapter, but what was to become the concluding published episode. He stated that "under the circumstances the *Atlantic*

will of course not proceed with its plan to publish the whole collection in book form without being able to substantiate it."

The press carried articles that "Ellery Sedgwick, editor and Nelson J. Peabody, publisher, of *The Atlantic Monthly* had announced that the series of Abraham Lincoln articles now running in that publication will be withdrawn because of the dispute over the authenticity of reputed Lincoln documents incorporated in the articles."

Miss Minor also made a statement for the press: "In view of the serious criticism offered against the authenticity of the Lincoln material now appearing over my signature in the *Atlantic Monthly*, I now formally withdraw the same from further publication."

Perhaps a full length book could be written about these *Atlantic Monthly* articles because of the furor they created. Such Lincoln authorities and handwriting experts as Worthington C. Ford, Paul M. Angle, Logan



## THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

has the great honor to announce the publication of the

## Original Love Letters

which passed between

## Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge

AT last, after nearly a century during which their existence was always suspected and hoped for, appear the priceless documents which lift the veil shrouding the love affair between Abraham Lincoln and young Ann Rutledge.

No longer need the biographer spend years of research, or the romancer dream of the idyll as it might have been. Here, for the first time, is revealed in Lincoln's own words, the tender love he bore for his "Dearly Valued Ann."

To the *Atlantic's* care has been confided the invaluable package inherited by Miss Wilma Frances Minor. Here are Lincoln's letters to Ann, and Ann's to Lincoln; letters from Lincoln to his friend and benefactor, John Calhoun; letters from the twenty year old Ann to her cousin Mathilda Cameron, describing Lincoln's wooing ("he talks to me just like poetry," wrote the gentle, untutored girl); Mathilda's simply written revealing diary; the Bible Ann gave to Abraham; the little book of rhetoric with characteristic marginalia, which was the young Abe's daily companion through the days when he lived out the idyll of New Salem.

To those already privileged to see this collection, these documents seem the most moving personal mementoes in our history. Their deposit in the Treasure Room of the Congressional Library in Washington has been invited by the librarian.

Our first question, like the reader's, was,

of course, But, can this be true? Where have these letters been hidden all these years? When Lincoln scholars, students, lovers of his name, have eagerly searched for the proofs of this romance just hinted at in a few casual references and meager records of a scattered group of places and people, why have they not been discovered and given to the world before?

If there is one life of which the American people wish to know everything, it is Lincoln's, and his is the one life about which it long ago seemed impossible to unearth any new material.

And what have Lincoln scholars to say about this find? The leading Lincoln biographers and the country's most distinguished chemist who scrutinized the paper to determine if it were authentically of the period, — do they all accept these documents as the living record of the fragrant romance?

The answer to every question will be published in detail in the *Atlantic Monthly* beginning in December.

Miss Minor's story, with all its wealth of original, invaluable and long-sought Lincoln material, will begin in that issue. This feature alone, the first printing of these documents, will make an *Atlantic* subscription for the coming year a life-long keepsake — and incidentally a most appropriate Christmas remembrance.

The Lincoln story will be surrounded by an editorial program of true *Atlantic Monthly* standard.

The Lincoln serial will begin in the December *Atlantic Monthly*



Hay, Oliver R. Barrett, Louis A. Warren, Charles A. Seiders and Edward L. Dean were quick to note historical discrepancies and handwriting flaws in the articles. Later on, Carl Sandburg, William E. Barton and Ida M. Tarbell, with some reluctance, joined the others in a denunciation of the Minor articles.

Ford, Seiders and Dean were particularly critical of the handwriting in the documents. They noted such differences (from original Lincoln letters) as to make it impossible that the same man could have written the manuscripts printed in the magazine. Ford also discovered that one letter, when examined under a powerful glass, did not indicate the roughness natural in an eroded document, but showed the clean-cut marks of scissors.

It was also pointed out that none of the documents revealed a fold, and this was the day before envelopes, when letters were folded and addressed on the outside sheet. It is also well to note that none of the letters were sent through the mail. The same critic pointed out that to test the paper is no test at all, because old paper is hoarded by binderies and fly-leaves of old books are readily available. Neither could an ink test be conclusive because if soaked in tea or treated chemically any quality of fading can be achieved. Ford also scoffed at Sedgwick's claim that Lincoln had two definitely distinct styles of writing.

Seiders found in the documents a peculiarly formed letter "J" written identically by "Abe" and "Mat" and "Sally." He believed that in all spurious documents some particular is always overlooked. Dean, who was a dealer in rare manuscripts, stated that after he examined photostatic copies of the originals, it was his opinion that the forgeries were written within the last fifteen years.

Angle, Hay and Barrett attacked the letters largely from an historical approach. Angle was struck by what he called "a startling weakness in the chain of circumstances by which these documents have been transmitted from Lincoln's day to the present." He pointed out that (according to John Carroll Power's "History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County") John Calhoun had no daughter named Sarah or Sally.

The historical authorities also attacked Lincoln's statement (July 22, 1848) regarding an "inheritance" from his step-mother, which was an odd way for him to express his regard for Sarah Bush Johnston. Likewise, Mrs. Lincoln was not in Washington, D.C. (she was probably enroute to Washington from Lexington, Kentucky) at the time she is mentioned as being there in the letter of July 22, 1848. Lincoln supposedly closed his letter by writing "... Mary is well thank the Lord ..." and Logan Hay pointed out that "Lincoln ... always spoke of God and did not use the term Lord unless he was quoting."

Countless other discrepancies were cited as to chirography, chronology, geography and history, but one of the most glaring errors which apparently severely shook the confidence of the *Atlantic Monthly* editor appeared in the May 9, 1834 letter in which Lincoln was alleged to have written to John Calhoun; namely, "the Bixby's are leaving this week for some place in Kansas." How could this have been possible? Kansas was not organized as a territory until 1854. Twenty years previous to this date the area was Indian land. The name "Kansas" in 1834 was restricted to the Kansas River.

Another error almost as glaring as the "Kansas" one dealt with the federal land system of townships six miles square with thirty-six sections that are one mile square. In the same letter dated at New Salem, May 9, 1834 Lincoln allegedly wrote John Calhoun "if you have in your possession or can tell me where you left the certificate of Survey of Joshua Blackburn's Claim, there seems some controversy between him and Green concerning that North East quarter of Section 40 — you remember." How could there be a section 40?

Another error that Sedgwick could not very well live with, although he offered an explanation, concerned a letter from Ann Rutledge where she made reference to Spencer's copy-book, when in fact Spencer's first publication on penmanship was made thirteen years after the death of Ann Rutledge.

Worthington C. Ford and Paul M. Angle were likely the most vociferous of all *The Atlantic Monthly's* critics, and syndicated articles quoting them appeared in many metropolitan newspapers and the "letters" became a topic for several editorial writers.

A writer for the *Christian Science Monitor* (December 17, 1928) pointed out that Mr. Sedgwick had exhibited the proper humility but "does that relieve the public mind" and the writer further pointed out that the "public may rule that no editor has the right to be mistaken where material of such exquisite import is involved."

A *New York Times* writer (January 23, 1929) under the heading of "The Romantic Temperament" seemed relieved that the "new storehouse of Lincoln" had been branded fraudulent, because it would leave us (if authentic) with a "slobbering, inflated and illiterate Lincoln."

### Medal of Honor

The highest distinction which can be earned by a member of the armed services of the United States is the Medal of Honor. The award is usually presented by the President, in the name of Congress, to an individual who while serving in the armed services "distinguishes himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty." Because the medal is

presented in the name of the Congress of the United States, it is sometimes called the Congressional Medal of Honor.

This award was conceived in the early 1860s and was first presented in 1863. The creation of the award went through an evolved process. Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa, chairman of the Senate Naval Committee, introduced a bill to create a Navy medal. This bill was passed by both Houses of Congress and was approved by President Lincoln on December 21, 1861. It was designed for enlisted men of the Navy and Marine Corps.

A bill for the creation of an Army medal started two months later by Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts. As a member of the Committee of Military Affairs and the Militia he introduced a Senate resolution providing for the presentation of "medals of honor" to enlisted men of the "Army and Volunteer Forces" who "shall distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action, and other soldier-like qualities." President Lincoln approved the resolution on July 12, 1862.

However, the Act was amended on March 3, 1863 which extended the provision to include officers as well as enlisted men, and made the provisions retroactive to the beginning of the Civil War. This legislation under which the Army medal of honor could be awarded remained in force until July 9, 1918, when it was superseded by a new and revised statute.

After five designs of a medal for the Navy were drawn, the suggestion was made to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that one would be appropriate for the Army. On May 6, 1862 the Navy approved one of the designs. On November 17, 1862 the War Department selected a design for the Army. The only difference was that the Army medal was attached to its ribbon by means of an American eagle standing on crossed cannon and cannon balls, while the Navy medal was attached to its ribbon by an anchor. Numerous changes in the Army and Navy medals have been instituted over the years as well as the creation of an Air Force Medal of Honor.

On March 25, 1863 the first Army Medals of Honor were presented by Secretary of War Stanton to six members of the Andrews' raiders through Georgia. This raid was perpetrated by 22 Union volunteers in April 1862 to sabotage the important Confederate rail link between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The men disguised as civilians captured the locomotive *General* at Big Shanty, Georgia, which was 200 miles deep in Confederate territory. Under close pursuit by the enemy, the party fled north, attempting to destroy the track and burn the bridges along the way.

After a ninety mile chase the raid ended with the capture, a few days later, of all the men. Andrews and seven others were tried and executed. On March 25, 1863, six of the party,



paroled from a Confederate prison, arrived in Washington to be presented with Medals of Honor.

Following the presentation of the medals, Stanton escorted the six men to the White House for a visit with Lincoln. The Medal of Honor was subsequently awarded to thirteen other members of the raiding party, some posthumously.

On April 3, 1863, the first Navy Medals of Honor were awarded to several sailors for taking part in the attacks on Fort Jackson, Fisher and St. Philip, on April 24, 1862.

Lincoln was unduly lavish in the presentation of the Army Medal of Honor. As an inducement for re-enlistment he offered an entire regiment (27th Maine Volunteer Infantry) the medal. Their enlistment was to expire in June of 1863. Those men who re-enlisted numbered 309. Certainly they were displaying "soldierlike qualities" as extended duty would cause them to face battle action and possible death. Under these conditions they were entitled to the medal according to the provisions of the original law.

Unfortunately, a clerical error led to awarding those soldiers who did not accept Lincoln's offer a medal. This confusion led to awarding 864 medals to one group.

On October 16, 1916 a board was created, under the Army Reorganization Bill, to gather all of the 2,625 Medal of Honor records for study, and 911 names were subsequently stricken from the list on February 15, 1917. Of these, the 864 soldiers of the 27th Maine Volunteer Infantry, along with forty-seven others, were deleted from the record. Two of the forty-seven were William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) and Mary Walker (a Civil War surgeon), the only woman who had received such an honor. Under the provisions of the act of June 3, 1916 a recipient of the award must have exhibited "distinguished conduct . . . involving actual conflict with an enemy."

No members of the naval service who had received the Medal of Honor were deleted from the list.

To avoid a misuse of the numerous provisions regarding awards, and to clear away any inconsistencies of the legislation that had grown around the army medal, a new act was approved on July 9, 1918, which provided that "the President is authorized to present, in the name of Congress, a Medal of Honor only to each person who, while an officer or enlisted man of the Army, shall hereafter, in action involving actual conflict with an enemy, distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

On February 4, 1919 a new (second) Medal of Honor was approved by Congress for Navy personnel who met the requirements similar to Army personnel except that the words "without detriment to the mission" were added.

Numerous other legislation, executive orders and governmental board recommendations have been enacted under different Presidential administrations to make the Medal of Honor the most coveted of all military awards.

**Editor's Note:** A book of 1087 pages entitled *Medal of Honor 1863-1968*, prepared under the direction of The Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs Of The Committee on Labor and Public Welfare United States Senate, was published in 1968 by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, price \$4.50. This short article, the information of which was secured from the above mentioned book, only attempts to cover the history of the Medal of Honor during the Lincoln administration.

## Lincoln And A Weather Prophet

Francis L. Capen wished to predict the weather for the War Department, and in a letter addressed to the President, dated April 25, 1863, he stated, "I will guarantee to furnish meteorological information that will save many a serious sacrifice." In the center of Capen's one-page letter appears his card with the following information: "Thousands of lives & millions of dollars may be saved by the application of Science to war. Francis L. Capen. Certified Practical Meteorologist & Expert in Computing the Changes of the Weather."

Apparently, Lincoln considered Capen more of a crank than a scientist (other correspondence seems to confirm this), and he endorsed the letter with the following comment: "It seems to me Mr. Capen knows nothing about the weather, in advance. He told me three days ago that it would not rain again till the 30th of April or 1st of May. It is raining now & has been for ten hours. I can not spare any more time to Mr. Capen. April 28, 1863. A. Lincoln."

Perhaps the Capen episode in Lincoln's busy life prompted the telling of a yarn about "The Weather Prophet." In the year 1863, an article was published in *Leslie's Weekly* magazine (article not located) concerning Lincoln's humor. The fact was pointed out that the President's jokes were like the parables of old, told not for the joke's sake but for lessons of wisdom. An example of Lincoln's humor was related with a story about a weather prophet, which has appeared in several versions in different localities.

Whether or not Lincoln actually told this tale is beside the point, because it amply demonstrates the skill with which Lincoln used parables to illustrate a current problem.

According to *Leslie's Weekly*, Mr. Lincoln was besieged with office seekers when he first assumed the Presidency. One day, when about twenty patronage seekers had taken possession of his office, armed with credentials and perfectly good reasons why they should be given high wage government positions, Lincoln is reported to have said:

"Gentlemen, I must tell you a story. Once they wuz a king. And the king he hired him a prophet to prophet him his weather. One day the king he notioned

to go fishin' but the best fishin' place was nigh onto where his best girl lived so he aimed to wear him his best clothes. So he called in his prophet and he says, 'Prophet, is hit a-comin' on to rain?' and the prophet he says, 'No, king, hit hain't a-comin' on to rain not even a sizzle-sozzle.'

"So the king, he put on his best clothes and got his fishin' tackle and started down the road toward the fishin'-place. And he met a farmer ridin' a jack-ass. And the farmer says, 'King, if you hain't aimin' to get them clothes wetted, you'd best turn back for hits a-comin' on to rain, a trash-mover and a gulley-washer.' And the king drewed himself up and he says, 'I hire me a high-wage prophet to prophet me my weather and he 'lows as how hit hain't a-comin' on to rain not even a sizzle-sozzle.' So the king he went a-fishin'. And hit come on to rain a clod-buster and a chunk-mover, and the king's clothes wuz wetted and they shrunked on him. And his best gal she seen him and laffed. And the king was wroth and he went home and throwed out his prophet. And he says, 'Fotch me thet thar farmer, and they fotched him. And the king says, 'Farmer, I throwed out my other prophet and I aims to hire you to prophet me my weather from now onnards.' And the farmer he says, 'King, I hain't no prophet. All I done this evenin' wuz to look at my jack-ass's ears. For if hit's a-comin' on to rain his ears lops down, and the harder hit's a-comin' on the lower they lays. And this evenin' they wuz a-layin' and a-loppin' and the king says, 'Go home, farmer. I'll hire me the jack-ass,' and thats how hit started, and the jack-asses hev been holdin' down all the high-wage government jobs ever sense."

This sing-song parable lends itself well to an expert story-teller, and many years ago at a large Washington, D.C. Lincoln banquet a college president rendered "The Weather Prophet" in a masterful way only to have his audience informed by a well-known Lincoln authority (without a sense of humor) that "the king did not go fishing—he went hunting!"

## McMurtry's Speaking Itinerary 1970

St. Louis, Missouri	Jan. 12 & 13
Dallas, Texas	Jan. 15 & 16
Fort Worth, Texas	Jan. 19 & 20
San Antonio, Texas	Jan. 22 & 23
Houston, Texas	Jan. 26 & 27
Tyler, Texas	Jan. 29 & 30
Washington, D.C.	Feb. 12

On Lincoln's birthday a special achievement award will be conferred upon Dr. McMurtry the details of which will be announced later.

Baltimore, Maryland	Feb. 13 & 16
Richmond, Virginia	Feb. 17 & 18
Norfolk, Virginia	Feb. 19 & 20
Atlanta, Georgia	Feb. 23 & 24

## CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY 1968 - 1969

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members: Arnold Gates, 289 Hyde Park Road, Garden City, New York; Carl Haverlin, 8619 Louis Avenue, Northridge, California; E. B. Long, 708 Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park, Ill.; Ralph Newman, 18 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago, Ill.; Dr. Kenneth A. Bernard, Boston University, Boston, Mass.; James T. Hickey, Illinois State Historical Library, Centennial Bldg., Springfield, Ill.; Hon. Fred Schwengel, 636 Union Arcade, Davenport, Iowa; Dr. Wayne C. Temple, 821½ S. Fifth Street, Springfield, Ill. New items available for consideration may be sent to the above addresses or to the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

1968

## THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION 1968-49

(Lincoln Portrait) The/Lincoln Home/Area [Cover title] (Plan for the Lincoln Home Area drawn up by members of The Abraham Lincoln Association assisted by The Junior League of Springfield and Mrs. Inez C. Hoffman, legal advisor. Brochure designed by Bill England of W. R. Hahn Advertising.)

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 6½" x 11", (6) pp., illus.

## ILLINOIS STATE JOURNAL &amp; ILLINOIS STATE REGISTER 1968-50

A/history of the/Demolition and Reconstruction/of the Illinois Old State Capitol./Rededicated during Illinois Sesquicentennial Year 1968/(picture)/Illinois State Journal (Device) Illinois State Register/Springfield, Illinois [Cover title]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 12" x 9", (22) pp., illus.

## ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1968-51

(Seal of Illinois State Historical Society/Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society/Volume LXI Number 4/ Winter 1968/Printed by Authority/of the State of Illinois/Samuel H. Shapiro, Governor.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 9½" x 6¼", pp. 397-512, illus.

## LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 1968-52

Lincoln Memorial University Press Winter, 1968/ Vol. 70, No. 4/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical/research in the field of Lincolniana and/the Civil War, and to the promotion/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education. [Harrogate, Tenn.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10½" x 7½", pp. 179-216, illus., price, \$1.50

## PEARSON, EMMET F. 1968-53

Tragic Deaths Of The Lincoln Sons/By Emmet F. Pearson, M.D./Springfield [Caption title] (Reprinted from Illinois Medical Journal, November, 1968.

Folder, paper, 11" x 8", (4) pp., illus.

## THOMAS, BENJAMIN P. 1968-54

(Device). Abraham/Lincoln/A Biography/By Benjamin P. Thomas/(Device)/The Modern Library/New York [The First Modern Library Edition, September, 1968, Copyright 1952 by Benjamin P. Thomas. Published by Random House, Inc. New York.]

Book, cloth, 8¼" x 5¾", 548 pp., xii p., illus. with maps, price, \$3.95.

1969

## CASHMAN, DOROTHY M. 1969-3

Lincoln's/Only/Love/(Port. of Mary Todd)/By/Dorothy Cashman [Cover title] (Copyright 1969 by Dorothy M. Cashman)

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8½" x 5½", 19 pp., illus., price, \$1.00. (Lincoln Tcm, Springfield, Ill. 62702)

## COLEMAN, J. WINSTON, JR. 1969-4

Assassination of President Lincoln/and the/Capture of John Wilkes Booth/By/J. Winston Coleman, Jr., author of/Historic Kentucky,/Lexington during The Civil War, etc./An address delivered before the Chevy Chase/Coffee Club, Lexington, February 10, 1969./ (Device)/Privately Printed/Lexington, Kentucky/1969 [Limited Edition of 250 Copies, printed by The Thoroughbred Press, 1969]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 9½" x 6¼", (Port.), 10 pp.

## ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY 1969-5

Illinois/History/Volume 22/Number 5/February 1969/ Abraham Lincoln/(Cut of portrait Young Mr. Lincoln)/ Lincoln and the Arts—The Law Went/Swimming—The Peoria Debate—A/Big Day in Springfield—That/Baltimore Plot — "Old Abe Is/Nominated!" — The Artist Changed/His Mind—"Only a Man after All"—/The Patient President—The Unpopular/Candidate—Batavia's Famous Visitor — A/Family Reminder — Two Lincoln Letters (Cover title)[Published by the Illinois State Historical Library for the Illinois State Historical Society, Centennial Bldg., Springfield, Ill. 62706]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7¼", pp. 99-119, illus.

## LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 1969-6

Lincoln Herald/Index/Vol. 69/Spring, 1967 through Winter, 1967/Compiled by Gary R. Planck/Edited by/Wayne C. Temple/Lincoln Memorial University Press/Harrogate, Tennessee/1969.

Pamphlet, paper, 10½" x 7½", 13 pp.

## MOCHIZUKI, MASAHARU 1969-7

(Device)/Tokyo Lincoln Center/Report No. Ten/February 12, 1969/(3 lines of printing in Japanese language)/[Cover title] (Printed in Tokyo, Japan, 2 Sarugakuchō 1-chrome, Chiyoda-ku, Japan. Tokyo Lincoln Center, Masaharu Mochizuki, Director.)

Pamphlet, paper, 10½" x 7¼", 11 pp., illus., printed in both Japanese and English.

## PHILLIPS, RICHARD M. 1969-8

Iliniwek/Accounts of the History, Science and People of the Great Midwest/Volume 7 May-June 1969 Number 3/(picture)/ [Cover title] (Issue devoted to Abraham Lincoln. Title: Prairie Lawyer.)

Four page folder, 17½" x 11½", pp. 18-24, illus. (Published bi-monthly. Copyrighted by Richard M. Phillips. Subscription \$3.00 annually. Iliniwek, Box 2312, East Peoria, Illinois.)

## OSTENDORF, LLOYD 1969-9

The Photographs/of Mary Todd Lincoln/by Lloyd Ostendorf/ [Copyright 1969 by the Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois 62706]

Brochure, cloth, 9¾" x 6½", 64 pp., illus., price \$3.40. (Reprint from Autumn 1968, Vol. LXI, No. 3, issue of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*.)

## SEARCHER, VICTOR 1969-10

Lincoln Today/An Introduction to Modern Lincolniana/ By Victor Searcher/(Device)/Thomas Yoseloff/New York South Brunswick London [Copyright 1969 by Victor Searcher. Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, Cranbury, New Jersey 08512]

Book, cloth, 8½" x 5¾", 342 pp., price, \$7.50.

## SMITH, E. B. 1969-11

Lincoln: Opportunist or Statesman/By E. B. Smith/ Ames, Iowa/Address at Annual Meeting/Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin/Madison/1969/Historical Bulletin No. 24/ 1969 [Cover title]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7½", 17(1) pp., illus.

## TURNER, JUSTIN G. 1969-12

A Leaf/From The/Lincoln & Herndon/"Commonplace/ Notebook" [Cover title]

Folio, 12¾" x 8½", containing text by Justin G. Turner, folder "The Dearborn Independent, November 20, 1926," with article "Letter to the Folks" by Matthew S. Marsh of New Salem, Illinois in 1834 and franked by Postmaster A. Lincoln. Drawing of Lincoln in profile by Dana Bartlett. A record of authorities cited by Lincoln and Herndon to the Courts between 1849 and 1860. Single sheet.

## U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1969-13

Washington/The Lincoln Memorial/Washington DC/[Cover title] (U.S. Govt. Printing Office: 1969-346-120-206.)

Double folder, paper, 9¼" x 4", 4 printed columns, illus. (For sale by the Supt. of Documents, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, price 10¢.)



HAROLD K. SAGE  
2 GARY COURT  
NORMAL, ILLINOIS  
61761

26 January 1970

Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry  
Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Dr. McMurtry:

Your article in the current issue of Lincoln Lore about the Atlantic Monthly Lincoln hoax of forty-some years ago brings back many memories to me. You say a full length book might be written on the subject. I have such a book. It is a scrapbook, however, consisting of forty items, mostly from newspapers, arranged in chronological order. Back in those days I was pretty close to Paul Angle and he helped me find much of my material. I also had bound together the four Atlantic Monthly articles with the two Special Numbers of the Lincoln Centennial Association Bulletins, dated December 1, 1928 and January 1, 1929. It is all, as you suggest, an enjoyable re-reading.

I remember I thought at the time the whole thing was ridiculous. A ten year old boy could have recognized as a fake the purported Lincoln penmanship reproduced. It is, too, very much a story of the personalities involved, with Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the Atlantic, in the forefront. I never did forgive Carl Sandburg for at first trying to play up to Sedgwick, and then, after Barrett and Angle took him in charge, immediately reversed his position. Angle's gleeful boast about putting the magazine of the country into the frying pan and cooking it brown came to a reality. Sedgwick, with all his eastern snobbish look down attitude toward the mid-westerner, to save his own face, finally held the frying pan for Angle.

Sincerely,

*Harold K. Sage*

PAUL M. ANGLE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

April 3, 1929.

Dear Mr. Sage,

Add the Harvard Crimson (Harvard University student newspaper) for March 28, 1929 to your Atlantic list. It has two items in it you won't find anywhere else.

Also, "Time" for April 1 has  $\frac{1}{2}$  column, and there is an editorial in the Chicago Daily Journal for April 3, 1929.

Sincerely,  
Paul M. Angle.



THE LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

*Atlantic Monthly*  
*No. 1*

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

COPY

February 3, 1970

Mr. Harold K. Sage  
2 Gary Court  
Normal, Illinois 61761

Dear Mr. Sage:

Many thanks for your letter of January 26th. You must have a fine scrapbook on the Atlantic Monthly Lincoln hoax. I am sending you an extra copy of LINCOLN LORE for that scrapbook.

I am pleased that you enjoyed the brief comments that I made concerning "The Atlantic Monthly Fiasco."

Yours sincerely,

R. Gerald McMurtry

RGM/cvrv

P. S. Thanks for the Paul M. Angle note.

## THE LETTERS LINCOLN NEVER WROTE

Less than a year before the Wall Street crash of 1929, another kind of debacle was brewing—this one in the literary world. It took only a few months to perpetrate, but the full story would not be told for 50 years.

In late 1928, this heady promotion appeared in *Atlantic Monthly*: "At last, after nearly a century . . . appear the priceless documents which lift the veil shrouding the love affair between Abraham Lincoln and young Anne Rutledge. . . ."

The three-part series published by *Atlantic* starting in December of that year indeed contained love letters purportedly written by Lincoln to Rutledge. She, of course, was the daughter of the innkeeper at the inn in New Salem, Illinois, where Lincoln once lived.

Trouble was, the letters and other documents were forgeries, and not very good ones at that. Details of the hoax and how the *Atlantic* editor was hoodwinked have been pieced together in the last few years by distinguished Stanford University Lincoln scholar Don E. Fehrenbacher.

Wilma Frances Minor, a San Diego newspaperwoman, informed *Atlantic* that she'd discovered Lincoln's love letters among papers handed down by her family. *Atlantic* editor Ellery Sedgwick was understandably intrigued and agreed to publish the material, and pay well for it—pending verification of its authenticity.

He consulted several noted authorities on Lincoln. The verdicts ranged from "spurious" to "yes, they're authentic."

Publication of the material brought forceful denunciation from other leading Lincoln authorities. Private detectives were hired for what turned out to be a complex and exhausting investigation. After a handwriting expert later examined the letters, it was learned that Minor's mother, Cora DeBoyer, was the forger. When eventually confronted by an *Atlantic* staff member, Minor claimed the letters had been transmitted to her and her mother from the "astral plane."

In a subsequent issue, *Atlantic* ran a critique summarizing the evidence against the collection's authenticity—which was the magazine's final word on the subject. An *Atlantic* staff writer assigned to prepare an exposé came up with a 22-page manuscript detailing the hoax. Sedgwick declined to print it on the advice of the magazine's lawyers. "Sedgwick," writes Fehrenbacher, "stubbornly maintained his silence, motivated not only by legal considerations but also by weariness and mortification. He wanted to hear no more about Wilma Frances Minor and her Lincoln collection."

Why had this respected, veteran editor rushed the material into print without consulting handwriting experts or manuscript dealers in advance? "For one thing," says Fehrenbacher, "his emotional commitment to the project had warped his judgment. But in addition, as a good businessman, he wanted to use the series for promotion of subscription sales during the holiday season."

Sedgwick wrote his autobiography in 1946, making no mention of the Minor affair, and carried his silence to the grave with him in 1960.

Several persons knew the story and the curtain was not to be drawn forever. A 1973 autobiography by Edward Weeks, Sedgwick's successor as editor of *Atlantic*, contained details of the hoax, together with the text of Minor's confession.

As for the Lincoln-Rutledge love affair, Fehrenbacher says it remains a legend that has declined in credibility. "It's unlikely we shall ever know for sure. Yet perhaps somewhere in a battered trunk pushed into the darkest recess of an old attic there are documents—authentic documents—waiting to tell us the whole truth."





## The case of Lincoln forgery in 1928 has a familiar ring

WASHINGTON — The villain was, as you might expect, a columnist. The villainy was forgery of documents purporting to reveal the deepest motivations of a famous leader. The victim was a credulous magazine. The year was 1928, the magazine was *Atlantic Monthly*, the forgeries were letters from Abraham Lincoln to Ann Rutledge. The story, as told by Stanford's Don Fehrenbacher, America's foremost Lincoln scholar, is evidence that there really is nothing new under the sun.

Lincoln's life — his rise from humble origins, his tendency to melancholy, his tragic end in his hour of triumph — made him an irresistible subject for biographical embroidery, sentimentalism and the sort of speculative babble nowadays known as psychohistory. Hence the legend that young Abe fell ankles over elbows in love with Ann back in New Salem, and that her untimely death in 1835, when he was 24, made him especially spiritual and driven. One theory was that he submerged his private sorrow in public action, transferring his love to the republic.

In the summer of 1928, *Atlantic* received a letter from Wilma Minor, a San Diego columnist, claiming that Harper's wanted to publish her "true love story" based on original letters from Abe to Ann handed down in her mother's family. Minor said she preferred *Atlantic*. She was invited to Boston.

She had hot stuff, such as a letter written by Lincoln in the sixth year of his marriage to Mary Todd, confirming the legend that the memory of Ann ruled his life: "Like a ray of sun-shine and as brief — she flooded my life. . . . I see this picture before me — fever burning the light from her dear eyes, urging me to fight for the right. . . . I have kept faith. Sometimes I feel that in Heaven she is pleading for my furtherance." Minor quickly had a deal for three articles and a book, and Hollywood was interested.

The first expert consulted for authentication saw only photostats of the documents and warned that the documents were suspiciously compatible with popular legend. The next expert saw photostats and immediately said the documents were spurious. *Atlantic's* editor said experts naturally would be prejudiced against new evidence. When Minor's "original" documents arrived, *Atlantic's* editor said the fact that they presented a coherent picture and confirmed legend was evidence against a hoax.

The Orlando Sentinel, Thursday, May 19, 1983

A-23

Ida Tarbell, a muckraking journalist and Lincoln biographer, loved the Rutledge legend and said *Atlantic* had "an amazing set of true Lincoln documents." *Atlantic* consulted no handwriting experts or manuscript dealers. Minor was receiving lecture invitations by the time the December 1928 *Atlantic* arrived with the first installment of "Lincoln the Lover." Carl Sandburg, whose *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* had appeared in 1926, visited *Atlantic's* editor and endorsed the documents, which he said "preciously and wonderfully coordinate and chime with all else known of Lincoln."

But on Nov. 27, the secretary of the Lincoln Centennial Association in Springfield pronounced the documents forgeries. In Chicago, the leading collector of Lincoln manuscripts concurred. On Dec. 4, Sandburg reaffirmed his belief that the documents "have come to stay in the Lincoln record." The next day he recanted, saying, "When I scrutinize original source material of this kind, I let my emotions have full play. I try to do my hard-boiled analyzing later."

Suddenly skeptics were in full cry and Tarbell, the very model of a righteous journalist when judging others, denied she had vouched for the documents. Minor struck a pose of injured innocence as *Atlantic* published the second installment, "The Courtship." It included a letter from Ann to a non-existent cousin whose diary, supposedly written in the early 1830s, mentioned someone not born until 1843.

When *Atlantic* urged Minor to defend herself in court, Minor's mother sent a handwritten letter saying her daughter's health would not permit that. *Atlantic's* staff instantly recognized the mother's handwriting: They had seen it in the Minor documents. Eventually Minor confessed that she had received her information with her mother, who went into trances and communicated as a medium with other worlds. *Atlantic* never published the confession or told how the fraud unraveled. The thirst of journalistic organizations for full disclosure has limits.

The legend of Abe and Ann, based solely on the reminiscences of Lincoln's law partner, receded. Historians could concentrate on the not uninteresting business of explaining Lincoln's career in terms of slavery, secession, a man's moral greatness and stuff like that.

# Hitler's forgeries recall Lincoln's

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"Bloom forever, O Republic,  
From the dust of my bosom!"

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George Will

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Washington Post

## Today's Bible verse

Suggested by Drew N. Carter, Bristol

"And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and has given us such deliverance as this;"

Ezra 10:13



Sf N

Minor, Wilma Frances

([FORGERY], [ATLANTIC MONTHLY], [MINOR, WILMA FRANCES],  
[ILLINOIS, NEW SALEM], [BARTON, WILLIAM E.], [TARBELL,  
IDA M.], [RUTLEDGE, ANN], [ILLUSTRATED: MINOR COLLECTION]  
[SPURIOUS LETTERS], [MYTH])  
THE SETTING-NEW SALEM

Atlantic Monthly: December, 1928, pp. 834-856

Sf N

Minor, Wilma Frances

([FORGERY], [ATLANTIC MONTHLY], [MINOR, WILMA FRANCES],  
[ILLINOIS, NEW SALEM], [RUTLEDGE, ANN], [ILLUSTRATED:  
MINOR COLLECTION], [SPURIOUS LETTERS], [MYTH])  
LINCOLN THE LOVER. THE COURTSHIP

Atlantic Monthly: January, 1929, pp. 1-14

Minor, Wilma Frances

Sf N

([FORGERY], [ATLANTIC MONTHLY], [MINOR, WILMA FRANCES],  
[ILLINOIS, NEW SALEM], [RUTLEDGE, ANN], [SPURIOUS  
LETTERS], [MYTH])  
LINCOLN THE LOVER III. THE TRAGEDY

Atlantic Monthly: February, 1929, pp. 215-225

## LINCOLN ORIGINALS IN THE MINOR COLLECTION

### Books and Keepsakes

- Copy of the English version of the Polyglott Bible, dated 1831, bearing Lincoln signature and annotations
- Copy of *A Practical System of Rhetoric*, dated 1829, with Lincoln signature and annotations
- Copy of *An Essay on Elocution*, dated 1838, with Lincoln signature and annotations
- Title-page of *Elements of Geometry*, bearing Lincoln signature
- Piece of Ann Rutledge's coverlet
- Piece of lace made by Ann Rutledge
- Ornamental pin of silver wire given by Lincoln to Ann Rutledge

### Original Letters

- Ann Rutledge to Lincoln, beginning: 'Pleas do not cum to-nite'
- Ann Rutledge to Lincoln, beginning: 'I am t . . . ask me to and'
- Lincoln to Ann Rutledge, beginning: 'It greatly pains me to hear'
- Lincoln to Ann Rutledge, beginning: 'I am filled with regret'
- Lincoln to Ann Rutledge, beginning: 'Nancy has been telling me'
- Ann Rutledge to Matilda Cameron, beginning: 'I just can not help teling you about
- Ann Rutledge to Matilda Cameron, beginning: 'Dear Mat — I must rite you . . . this . . . grand hapning'
- Lincoln to John Calhoun, beginning: 'If you have in your possession or can'
- Lincoln to John Calhoun, beginning: 'Dear Old Friend. Yours of May 6th received
- Lincoln to John Calhoun, beginning: 'Dear John. Yours . . . I regret you feel so'
- Lincoln to John Calhoun, beginning: 'You old rascal — I am not risen to such heigh
- Lincoln to Sally Calhoun, beginning: 'In perusing your recent letter I am impressed
- Lincoln to F. W. Hirth, beginning: 'Esteemed Friend — Your letter has claimed my
- Lincoln to Jed Weatherby, beginning: 'You old rascal! What fate or sudden decision'
- Milinde Whipple to Matilda Cameron, beginning: 'Well we got heer at las it was a auful'
- Sally Calhoun to Elizabeth Hirth, beginning: 'Yours of May 2nd at hand. would have answered'
- Tow. Anderson to Gibson Holt, beginning: 'Dear Gippy — Yours to hand, wel you old,' and note added by Gibson Holt

### Letters Concerning Transmittal of Collection

- Elizabeth Hirth to her brother Fred, beginning: 'As I mail this letter I am expressing you a package of keepsakes'
- Sally Calhoun to Elizabeth Hirth, beginning: 'I have sad news to write you. last week'
- Margaret Morrison to her brother-in-law and sister, beginning: 'Bro. Norman has gone up to Hartford'

### Original Diaries and Memoranda

- 'A Tribute to My Mother,' by Lincoln
- Diary of Sarah Calhoun, dated June 2, 1848. Pages I-VIII
- Matilda Cameron's diary — 10 entries, 1833-1836
- Memorandum from Ann Rutledge to Lincoln, accompanying the gift of the Polyglott Bible
- Sketch map of New Salem, 13 by 9½ inches, drawn in retrospect and signed by John Calhoun in 1858



An Unparalleled Lincoln Discovery

# THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY



## LINCOLN THE LOVER

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over

Please return.

This is the most impudent suggestion yet, in view of Dr. B's own writings.

PAGE TEN

## SAYS LINCOLNIA FRAUD CERTAIN

Experts Assert Hingston  
Report Proves Atlantic  
Letters Fakes

### DR. BARTON SUGGESTS EDITORIAL APOLOGY

By JOHN GRIFFIN

Authorities on the life of Lincoln are hailing the report of William E. Hingston, handwriting expert, as another strong proof of the falsity of the Minor collection of Lincoln letters, which is being published by the Atlantic Monthly. Hingston's report, which labeled as forgeries the letters in the Minor group, was sent to the Atlantic 10 days ago, but has failed to bring forth any comment from officials of the magazine, other than a statement that the report was not sent officially to the Atlantic. Ellery Sedgwick, editor, is out of the state.

From several acknowledged authorities, however, have come statements in criticism of the monthly's publication of the collection. Dr. William E. Barton, in a long treatment of the subject, predicts that Mr. Sedgwick will have to admit that he is the victim of a fraud. He says:

It is the duty of those who honor the truth to expose and condemn the publication of this fraud. The Atlantic has assumed responsibility for publishing a hoax, and that this statement ought to be made simply, unhesitatingly and without equivocation.

#### PROOF OF FRAUD

Paul N. Angle, executive secretary of the Lincoln Centennial Association of Springfield, Ill., made the following comment:

I cannot conceive how Mr. Hingston's opinion could have been other than what it was, nevertheless, it constitutes one more item in the overwhelming proof of the spuriousness of the Minor collection.

Oliver R. Barrett, a Chicago attorney, who is recognized as one of the leading Lincoln authorities, when informed of the Hingston report, said:

The Atlantic letters are forgeries, the work of an amateur who was unable to closely imitate the handwriting or to approach the composition of Lincoln. The sponsors named by Sedgwick have either denied or recanted. Casabianca is still steadfast in a defence that shows neither fear nor faculty.

When the first instalment of the letters was published, the editor referred to an invitation to place the Minor collection on exhibition in the Treasure room of the Library of Congress. Miss Ida M. Tarbell, noted writer, was also mentioned at that time as having seen the letters and approved the publication.

coln letters. Careful study of my own completely confirms opinion of William E. Hingston, handwriting expert. Whether Miss Fitzpatrick or the Atlantic ordered the investigation, it is right that the investigation has been made. It is unfortunate that the Atlantic did not submit the documents to Hingston before it published them. Both the handwriting and the contents show the spurious nature of the collection. It is the duty of those who honor the truth to expose and condemn the publication of this fraud. I have not seen the detailed report of Hingston, but his conclusion is irrefutable.

#### MISS TARBELL'S COMMENT

Miss Tarbell yesterday made the following statement:

I regard the Minor collection of so-called Lincoln documents as a fascinating problem. I have never pronounced them either forgery or discovery because I have not as yet been able to give time to the thorough study of handwriting, history and subject matter which I consider necessary before reaching a fair judgment. I hope to do this soon.

The desirability of the collection as exhibits in the Library of Congress is independent of final judgment as to their authenticity, Librarian Herbert Putman said.

Dr. Barton's statement was, in part, as follows:

The letter thus far published by the Atlantic Monthly purporting to have been written by Abraham Lincoln when compared with any genuine writings of his manifest, both in general appearance and under close scrutiny, marked characteristics of forgery. When the two are magnified and again compared, the evidence of intentional fraud is increased. There exists no known body of manuscript in handwriting of Ann Rutledge and Mat Cameron, with which their alleged letters and diary shown in the Atlantic might be compared, but it is evident that these were all written by the same hand, and that it was the hand that wrote the alleged and forged Lin-



Mr. and Mrs. F. E. Lindley of San Diego, California, were the first to register. Mr. Lindley is an attorney for Wilma Francis Minor, of San Diego, who furnished the Atlantic Monthly the articles a year ago purporting to reproduce original correspondence between Lincoln and Ann Rutledge. It became very apparent that all the letters were written by the same person. There are letters of a very peculiar type that appear in each of the facsimilies reproduced. There are indications that they are very old, possibly written in Lincoln's time but not by Lincoln. In the first number in the Atlantic was the reproduction of a page purporting to be "from Sally Calhoun's record written at her father's suggestion in 1848." This may be the key to the whole affair. All the letters are written in the same hand and probably placed in this memorandum book. It might have been copied from originals or it may have been an essay or novel to show what could be done, but the Lincoln letters as reproduced were not in Mr. Lincoln's handwriting. Mr. Lindley thinks that his client believes that they were authentic, as they had passed down through several generations. There are discrepancies also in the matter of facts and no national Lincoln authority has come out in their defense.

# Critics Attack Alleged Lincoln Love Letters, Editor Defends Position

Were Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge lovers and did they write letters to each other? If they wrote them, how did they transmit the epistles? Did Abraham carry his bald out flat in his hand and deliver them in person? And if Abraham actually wrote letters to Ann, did he distort his handwriting and did he modify his style of composition for some purpose not revealed? All these questions naturally arise when one studies the controversy that has broken over the authenticity of certain written documents which the Atlantic Monthly of Boston has undertaken to publish as genuine and which many students of Lincoln's handwriting and composition declare are spurious.

The country continues to be concerned in the dispute over this Lincoln-Ann Rutledge correspondence, which the Atlantic is publishing in three installments. The first installment appeared in the December number. None of the love letters was included in that number but certain letters are published, the purpose of which is to establish the authenticity of those which are to follow.

## Society Attacks Letters

Immediately the Lincoln Centennial Association of this city, through its executive secretary, Paul Angle, attacked in the letters that appeared in the December Atlantic. The arguments which Mr. Angle used are familiar to the readers of The State Journal. A number of authorities on Lincoln have come forward in support of his theory. Among the most notable are Warrington C. Ford, editor of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and an authority on American history. Mr. Ford was chosen to make the final edit of Senator Beveridge's manuscript of his Lincoln. He has given it as his opinion that there is "conclusive evidence" that Lincoln never could have written the two letters ascribed to him in the first article in the Atlantic. Mr. Ford contends that the editor of the Atlantic Monthly has not proved that these documents are genuine.

On the other hand, a comparison of them with known Lincoln letters shows a difference in handwriting so fundamental as to make it impossible that the same man could have written the documents printed by the magazine. Mr. Ford, who has seen all of the letters, even those which have not yet been published, tells about one whose jagged edges do not indicate, under the magnifying glass, the roughness natural in an eroded document, but shows clean cut marks of scissors. He also points to the absence of creases or folds in the letters. He describes the methods used in that early day in folding a letter preparatory to its transmission through the mails. Mr. Ford does not accept the explanation that Lincoln wrote these love letters and carried them in his own hands to Ann Rutledge. Furthermore, Mr. Ford says that the faded ink is not any proof, because it is possible to fade ink by the use of tea.

## Editor Defends Stand.

Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the Atlantic, has said that he gave a great deal more attention to the historical data and personal records, supporting the authenticity of the documents, than to the handwriting itself, and he believes that the reasons for believing them genuine are more than ample to warrant the publication at this time. He cites Miss Ida Tarbell, Dr. William E. Barton and Carl Sandburg as having encouraged him to believe they are authentic. Doctor Barton has since disclaimed any responsibility, admitting that he saw the letters before their publication, but denied that he approved them. His latest view is that they are forgeries. Mr. Sedgwick asks the public to withhold a decision until all of the letters shall have been printed. Even if a few items were then found to be questionable, they might not condemn the whole collection, he adds.

In reply to Mr. Angle's intimation that there was no Sally Calhoun, one of the persons to whom these letters were committed, Mr. Sedgwick replies that there were four girls in the Calhoun family, and that, while none of them may have been known as Sally or Molly in the records, it is possible that one of them was known as Sally to her intimate friends.

Edward L. Dean of New York City, a leading dealer in rare manuscripts, gives it as his opinion that the Atlantic documents are forgeries, written within the last fifteen years. Mr. Oliver Barrett, probably the largest collector of Lincoln documents, characterizes "the whole thing as a hoax." It is obvious, he says, that the Lincoln letters published in the December issue of the Atlantic are not in Lincoln's handwriting, and more than that it is equally clear that they are not in Lincoln's style of composition. Louis A. Warren, director of the Lincoln Foundation and a competent research man in historical realms, says that "I am convinced that the Atlantic Monthly has been taken in to some extent, at least by the publication of letters credited to Lincoln, which he never could have written."

So far, the editor of the Atlantic is the only one who can contend that the letters are genuine and worthy of credence.



# LINCOLN FORGERIES TRICK COLLECTORS

Expert Fakes by a New Hand  
Appear Here, in Chicago  
and in New England.

## UNUSUAL IN THEIR LENGTH

Spurious Legal Documents Are  
Betrayed by Ink—Sheets  
From Old Ledgers Used.

Abraham Lincoln forgeries of such exceptional cleverness as to deceive several collectors and dealers have appeared recently in New York, New England and Chicago, it has been learned here.

These are among the most deceptive Lincoln forgeries that have come to light in many years. The source has not been discovered, so far as could be learned yesterday. A man who visited several dealers in attempts to sell the spurious documents is understood to have been questioned, but it was not revealed whether he was himself the forger or only a salesman. It was reported that prosecution might develop.

AM the spurious documents have turned up in the last few weeks, from sufficiently varied sources to indicate wide circulation of the forgeries. In one instance, at least, the forger has tried his hand on an autograph other than that of Lincoln and succeeded in doing a plausible Poe manuscript. Lincoln and Poe autographs are among the most valuable and sought for of all American autographs.

### Long Legal Documents.

So far the Lincoln forgeries appear to have been confined to legal documents, supposedly drawn up and signed by Lincoln in his own name or in that of one of his law firms. A feature of the spurious documents is their length. Most forgers confine their efforts to short letters or documents. One of the fake documents seen yesterday extended to some 700 words and contained three forged Lincoln signatures.

It was learned that Thomas F. Madigan, authority on autographs and Lincolniana, had been called into consultation recently to determine the genuineness of some of the questioned documents. When asked yesterday about the forgeries, Mr. Madigan said that they were among the cleverest he had ever seen.

1934 Forgeries

"One would almost think that Robert Spring, the notorious forger of Washington autographs about the time of the Civil War, had come back to life and turned his attention to Lincoln," Mr. Madigan said. "These forgeries certainly compare favorably with Spring's most expert work."

"The present forger has cleverly extracted sheets from old ledgers bearing watermarks prior to the dates of the documents he has faked. So there is nothing about the paper to arouse suspicion except that it is slightly heavier than that usually employed by Lincoln and is not ruled. Lincoln generally used ruled paper in his legal manuscripts."

"Then, too, there is no sign whatever of oxidation of the ink in these documents. The ink does not show through the paper, as it frequently does in authentic old documents as a result of the oxidation of the ink over a long period of time. The forger has used ink with a slightly brownish tinge but there is an evenness of color in the writing that is lacking in authentic Lincoln legal documents."

### Imitation Is Uneven.

The writing itself is an excellent imitation in some spots and in others is poor, according to Mr. Madigan. "Surprisingly enough, the signatures themselves don't quite click, although there are many words and lines in the main body of the documents that are well done."

The forger evidently has studied the published works of Lincoln, for the fake documents are entirely plausible as to content.

About a year ago some inferior Lincoln forgeries appeared on the market but were so poorly done that they were recognized at once by those at all familiar with Lincoln's writing. That forger confined himself to letters. The present forger is evidently not the one of a year ago, since the present fakes are much better. One of the mysteries in the present case is the forger's reason for risking long documents, which give wide opportunity for study and comparison with authentic autograph manuscripts.

"The forger of autographs generally gives himself away in some detail readily recognized by those who have studied the subject," Mr. Madigan said. "No matter how clever, he never quite covers his tracks."

Feb 8-1934

THE NEW YORK TIMES, T

# FORGERIES OF LINCOLN LETTERS BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

to his (man by said Auditor, said pretended  
claim on behalf of the United States, and  
the said interest bonds =

A. Lincoln p.p.

To the Clerk of the court = Let this be filed with the  
Court's record of the above entitled cause =

A. Lincoln

June 1<sup>st</sup> 1857

Springfield,

A Facsimile of One of the Spurious Documents Which Have Deceived Collectors and Dealers.

At the request of Mr. Crosby, I most cheerfully  
state that I confer fully in the foregoing certificate  
of Judge. It is thought not improper for me to  
add, that I am the Representative to Congress  
for the District in which Mr. Crosby resides.

A. Lincoln

A Genuine Lincoln Document Showing the True Handwriting and Signature of the Emancipator.



# BRAND LINCOLN LOVE LETTERS AS SPURIOUS

Further indictment of the Lincoln letters and memoranda which has been appearing in the Atlantic Monthly is seen in a round-robin statement issued by three persons versed in Lincoln lore and early history of the state.

The letter is issued and signed by Worthington C. Ford, editor, Massachusetts Historical society, Boston; Oliver R. Barrett, Chicago; and Paul M. Angle, Springfield, executive secretary of the Lincoln Centennial association.

In the Atlantic Monthly's January issue appears the second installment of the Lincoln letters and the round-robin statement of the three authorities cites five points to prove that the collection is spurious.

The statement follows:

"In the Atlantic Monthly for December, the editor, Mr. Ellery Sedgwick, printed a collection of Lincoln letters and memoranda and vouched for their authenticity. Acting independently, we gave a prompt challenge to the correctness of Mr. Sedgwick's conclusion, asserting that judging by known and accepted letters of Lincoln he could never have written those printed in facsimile in the Atlantic, and that the contents of the letters were so at fault, as to make them as impossible as the writing.

## Claim Editor Dodged Issue.

"Instead of meeting the points we made on the writing and contents of the documents, Mr. Sedgwick has evaded them by irrelevant suggestions, and has issued the second installment of the collection in the January number of the Atlantic Monthly. Whatever hope he may have held for the ultimate acceptance of these documents now appears futile, for the second series can be demonstrated to be spurious beyond the possibility of doubt.

"The Atlantic Monthly for January contains the heart of the collection. There are more memoranda from 'Sally' Calhoun, a letter of Lincoln to John Calhoun, letters of Lincoln to Ann Rutledge, others from Ann to Lincoln and Matilda Cameron, and extracts from the diary of Matilda.

"One of the first criticisms made against the December publication was that existing records failed to show that John Calhoun had a daughter named Sarah or Sally, who, according to the Atlantic story, was the second owner of the entire collection. In noticing the point Mr. Sedgwick suggested that one of the girls might have been known as Sally or Sarah to her friends. In reply we quote a letter from Mrs. Adele P. McCord of St. Joseph, Mo., dated, but postmarked Dec. 12, 1928—who is the only living grandchild of John Calhoun. Mrs. McCord writes, 'I became closely associated with her—the wife of John Calhoun, and my aunts, and never once did I hear any of them called Sally....The names (of the Calhoun children) were John, Andrew, Elizabeth, Seth, Albert, Martha, Susan, Mary and James.'

"Reliable evidence also reveals that Matilda Cameron, said by Mr. Sedgwick to have been the original possessor of this collection, is a legendary individual. Mrs. Edna Orendorff Macpherson of the Illinois State Historical Library—a great niece of the wife of John Cameron, Matilda's father—has in her possession a copy of the page in the Cameron family Bible on which the names and birth dates of the children were inscribed. The daughters were eleven in number—but the niece Matilda is conspicuously absent.

## Five Statements Impossible.

"In addition to these two general indictments, at least five specific statements which occur in the material printed in the January Atlantic are historically impossible.

"1. In Ann Rutledge's first letter to Lincoln, she writes, 'I am grateful for the Spencers copy-book I copy from that every time I can spare.' Spencer's first publication on penmanship was issued in 1848 thirteen years after the death of Ann Rutledge as proved by the entry, 'Anna Mayes Rutledge departed this life August 25th 1835,' in the Rutledge family Bible.

"2. In the undated diary entry, written presumably in 1833 or 1834, Matilda Cameron remarks, 'Marthy Calhoun teched Ann sum new paterr of kroschay and she is going to tech me.' Martha Calhoun, sixth child of John Calhoun, was born January 9, 1843, about nine years after the diary entry.

"3. Twice Matilda Cameron writes of boats from Springfield, once when she states that her church got the first 'New Missouri Harmony Hym book on the last boat from Springfield'; and again when she records that 'the boat being du Satiday cum in while we wuz by the mill and Dave turnham a friend of Abe from gentryville.....cum down.' Yet Springfield is and always was six miles distant from the Sangamon river. Moreover, the records indicate that only twice was the Sangamon navigated by boats of any size. The talisman got to a point near Springfield in 1832, and hastily retreated just in time to avoid being stranded by the receding waters. Four years later The Utility managed to get as far as New Salem, only to be tied to the dam and sold for timber because the river was too low to permit its departure.

## Find Surveying Error.

"4. 'Lincoln on May 9, 1834 is made to write John Calhoun—both men being official surveyors—an inquiry regarding the Certificate of Survey of Joshua Blackburns Claim,' and to inform him that 'there seems some controversy between him and Green concerning that North East quarter of Section 40.' In surveying the Old Northwest the government system allowed thirty-six sections to a township—never more.

"5. 'In the same letter Lincoln is made to say that 'the Bixby's are leaving this week for some place in Kansas.' At this time Kansas was not open to white settlement, and, according to contemporary gazetteers, the name was applied only to the river. The vast territory west of Missouri and north of Arkansas territory in which the present state of Kansas is located was then known as 'Missouri territory' or 'Indian territory.'

"The January Atlantic only strengthens our conviction that the entire Minor Collection is spurious, fabricated by one who had imperfect knowledge of the persons and events described. There is certainly nothing of Lincoln in what has been printed and the taint of so large a portion affects the entire body of the material."

